

OVER THE DIVIDE

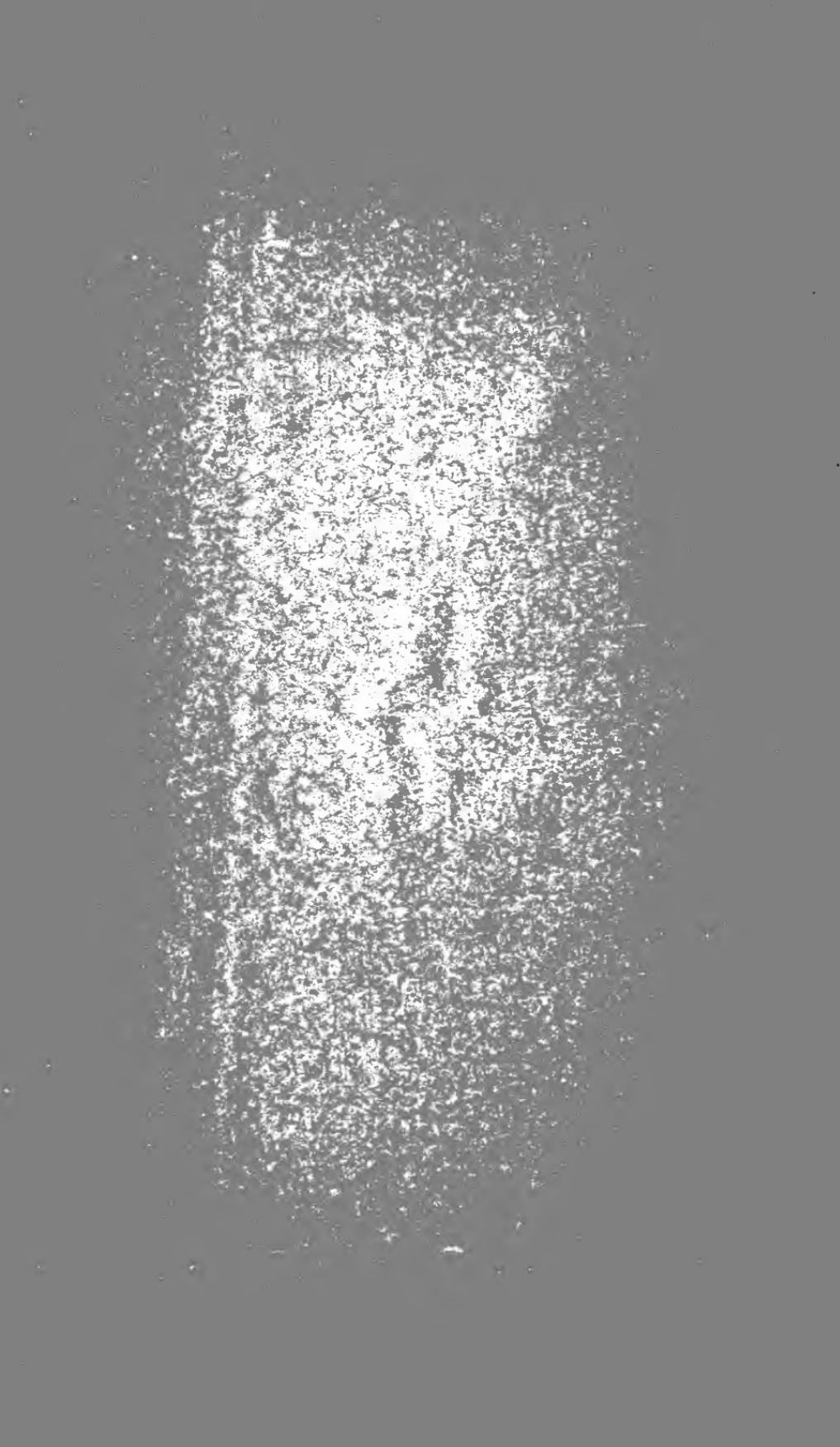
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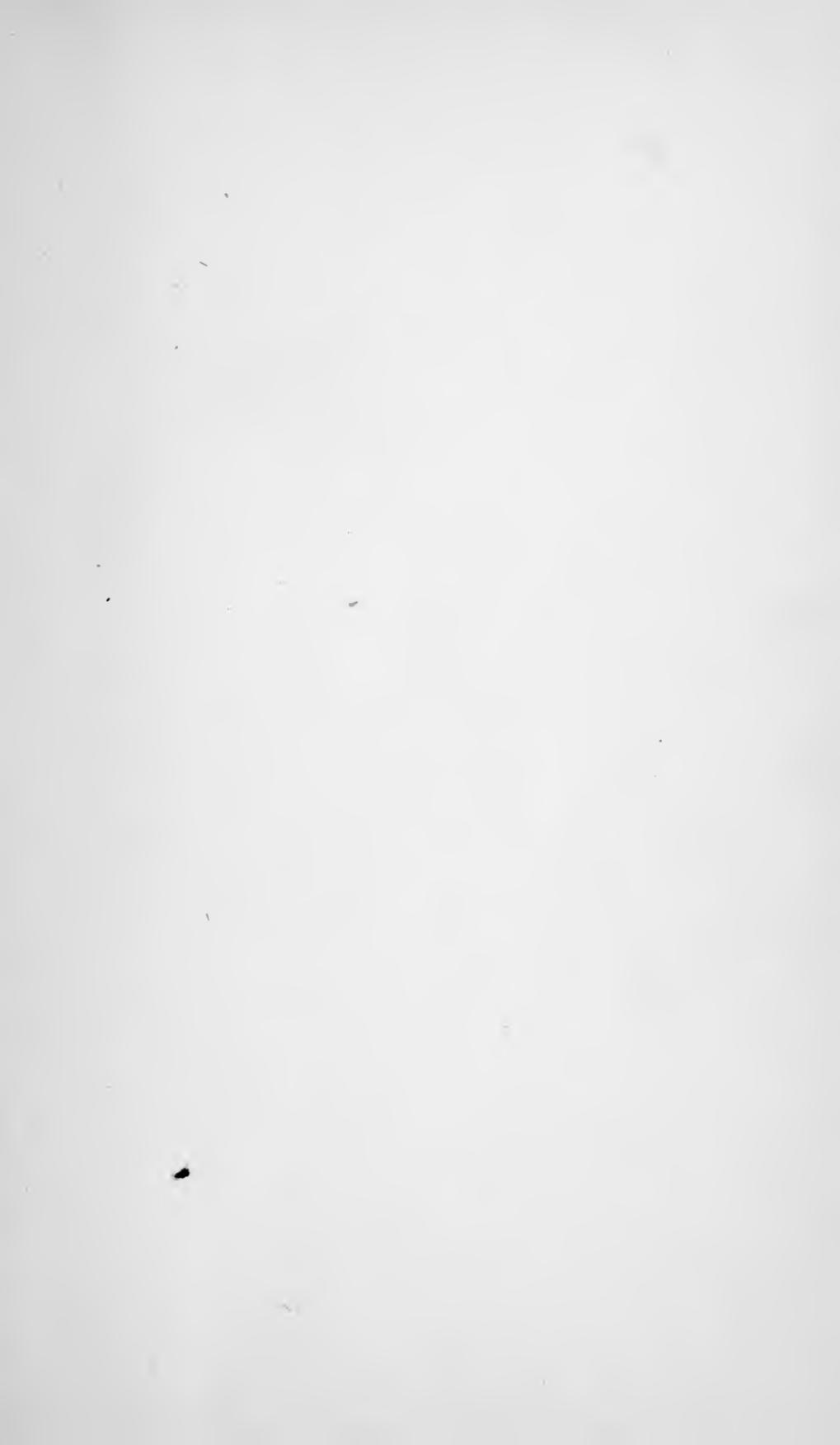
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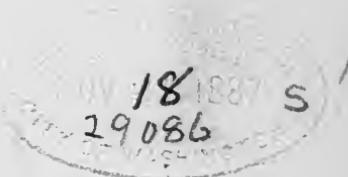
OVER THE DIVIDE:

AND

OTHER VERSES.

BY
MARION MANVILLE. *Pope*

33



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W. A. D.

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TO

MY MOTHER,

WHOSE CONSTANT LOVE, FAITH, AND ENCOURAGEMENT,
HAVE BEEN THE INCENTIVE TO WHICH I OWE
WHATEVER OF MERIT THIS VOLUME
MAY CONTAIN,

I DEDICATE

IT IN ALL LOVE AND REVERENCE.

P R E F A C E.

SOME of the verses contained in this volume were written in the author's early teens. Many have been published in leading periodicals and kindly received, and the dramatic poems have been read with success by dramatic readers. One of the latter, "The Surrender of New Orleans," is adapted from Mr. George W. Cable's article entitled "New Orleans before the Capture."

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M. M.



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P R E L U D E.

BUT one of a thousand voices,
 Oh, how can *one* voice be heard,
When ninety and nine and nine hundred
 Are chanting the same old word ?

But one of a thousand singers,
 What song can *I* sing, oh pray,
That is not sung over and over,
 And over again to-day ?

OVER THE DIVIDE.

WAL, Kern'l, this 'ere's th' shanty, an' this all 'round 's
th' camp ;
It don't look over-invitin', 'spacially when it's some
damp.
But a feller who's come here concluded he'll try on
his luck in a mine
Can't look fer ter find things regardless, ner got up
overly fine.
We ain't got no modern improvements, ner antikitys
here we can spare,
Unless ye maught count in th' grizzlies, er ten er
twelve reds on a tare.
An' as fer th' trades represented in shanties here-
abouts, as *I've* found,
It *maught* be the head ranch o' a sexton, with shovel
an' pick-axe around.
But we don't *undertake* fer ter furnish that kind o' a
wictim out here,—
Unless he's a claim-jumpin' rascal, an' then ye jes' bet
he pays dear !
An' as fer the sort o' a business we *does* undertake fer
ter do,
Why, every last man among us is bound ter see th'
thing through,

Unless, in th' course of discussion, he gits some lead
inter his hide,
An' then he jes' quit-claims th' shanty, an' passes on
'cross th' Divide.

Wal, yes, I've ben here fer somethin' like twenty-five
year,
But when I cut out fer th' diggin's 'twas a mighty
cute trick ter git here.
We couldn't pull out from St. Louis, booked through
in a boss sleepin'-car,
Though many a poor chap 's a sleepin' on the road
'a-twixt here an' thar.
An' th' only Pullman we fellers could boast on th'
Overland Trail
Was pull every man fer himself, sir, an' never give
up an' say fail !

Th' cayotes they howled round our camp-fires an'
prairie-dogs yelped in a pack,
But we'd set our faces to west'ard, an' thar wa'n't no
easy back-track.
We slept in our prairie-schooners, with a choice
a-twixt them an' th' groun',
An' thar wa' n't more feather pillers than we *needed*
a-lyin' aroun'.
But th' roof we had up above us—don't ye make no
mistake an' fergit—
Was a dum'd sight finer than any it's ben *my* good
luck ter see yit.
An' when all th' stars sot a-shinin', so peaceful an'
quiet, up thar,

I've seen many chaps lookin' east'ard, an' they wa'n't
lookin' out fer no star.
No, sir! they was every one trudgin' back over th'
long trail again,
An' while all th' stars was so chipper, some eyes had
suspicions o' rain;
Fer they was a-settin' an' thinkin' o' some o' th' folks
left behind,
An' somehow that sort o' reflection is rough on th'
average mind.
So when some feller was quiet fer a spell, an' then
cross as a *bar*,
We guv him th' whole o' th' prairie, fer we knew what
it was to be *thar!*

I must hav' had some experience? Wal, yes, I take it
I must.
Thar's consider'ble lively excitement, an' a feller must
hang on er bust.
Ye see, we jes' whoop 'er up lively, an' things rattles
'roun' fer th' best;
In th' States they'd call it high tragic, but it's comedy
here in th' West.
We carries our barkers an' rifles, an' a knife er two
tucked in each boot,
An' th' feller that tells th' best story is bound ter be
quick on the shoot.
—Me tell yer a story? Wal, yes, I s'pose I maught
try;
An' now, come ter think, here's a true one, that's
queerer than any durned lie;

So if ye hav' time fer ter listen, jes' fill up yer pipe
an' let go ;
Drawr up ter th' fire, fer it's chilly, an' that wind is
a-howlin' fer snow.

It was back in the fifties,—I reckon somewhars about
52,—

An' latish-like in the autumn, an' trains had a time
gittin' through.

Me an' my pardner, Bill Ed'ards, had staked out a
claim in th' gulch,

An' although we was somewhat discouraged, we didn't
intend fer ter squlch.

Bill was th' han'somest chap in th' diggin's,—that is,
on th' whole.

He come from a high-snuff old fam'ly, an' had a full
roun' at th' school

Out thar somewhars in th' Catskills,—West Point they
call it, I think,—

An' 'mongst th' rest o' his schoolin' he' larned fer ter
gamble an' drink.

An' so he cut loose fer th' Rockies, an' his folks—they
cut loose from poor Bill.—

D'ye see that pine-tree a-standin' up thar at th' top o'
th' hill?

Perty dark fer ter see it distinctly; if it wasn't we'd
jes' take a stroll

Fer ter read what it says on that tree-trunk a-standin'
up thar on th' knol.

Bill was a rough one ter tackle, although he run smooth
as a clock,

But when ye had riled him a little ye jes' set down
hard on bed-rock.

He *was* rough, as we most o' us air, sir ; git hardened
out here in th' hills,

A-takin' cold lead fer our ailin's, instead o' refined
sugar-pills.

But Bill he could talk like a grammar, an' was handy
ter give ter th' poor,

An' ekilly handy at pistols; we chaps mostly air, ter
be sure.

Wal, me an' him was a-settin' in this 'ere same room
ye see here.

It was gittin' late in the evenin', an' latish-like in th'
year.

I wasn't overly cheerful, an' Bill didn't set up fer ter
light

Th' whole o' th' neighborin' regions; things wasn't
a-goin' jes' right.

Not but what *we* was agreein', fer I never quarrelled
with Bill ;

Although he was chuck full of temper, it didn't take
much fer ter spill.

Wal, we was a-settin' an' talkin' in sort o' a ramblin'
way,

Fer when Bill was in with his tantrums he didn't go
much on th' say.

Th' wind was a-howlin' an' wailin', an' it didn't look
cheerful outside,

Fer ye never could tell in what corner o' darkness
some mischief might hide.

An' out in th' gully th' roarin' o' th' Little Chick-water was plain,
A makin' a heap o' a racket, fer th' river was riz with th' rain.
We sort o' quit talkin' an' listened, an' arter a spell we both heard
Th' sound o' a cry in th' distance; it maught be a wolf, —er night-bird,
Er mountain-panther a-yellin'; we often heard them out o' door,
But somehow we felt 'twas a *som'thin'* we never 'd heard *thar* before.
An' so we both on us dreaded a—wal, we didn't know what,
But listened sort o' expectant, as thar in dead silence we sot.
Th' wind blew up cold an' gusty, a bleakish sort o' a storm,
When sudden, a-fore th' winder, thar flitted a shadowy form.
Bill jumped,—he was quick as chain-lightnin',—an' hurriedly opened th' door,
When in thar staggered—a woman! an' fell with a moan ter th' floor.

Wal, Kern'l, I tell ye, if ever two fellers was paralized still
As if they was nailed in ther coffins, them fellers was jes' me an' Bill.
A woman!—by jingos! 'twas so long since we'd either seen one,

That if we'd a-follered our instincts I reckon we'd
 both cut an' run.
But thar th' poor thing was a-lyin', as still as if she
 was dead ;
So Bill he jes' kneels down beside 'er, an' lifted 'er
 poor little head,
An' unwound a long fixin' around it, an' then we
 could both see 'er face,
As purty an' sweet in 'er feature, an' somehow about
 'er th' trace
Of a lady,—a sure-enough lady. I tell ye it guv us a
 start,
But Bill he lifts 'er up gently, an' lays his ear over
 'er heart.
"It beats, but it's faint," sez he, softly. An' then we
 made 'er a bed,
An' Bill he stripped off his jacket fer ter roll it up
 under 'er head.
An' we rubbed 'er little cold fingers, an' covered 'er
 up by th' fire,
But it seemed fer a spell she was waitin' fer only a
 word ter go higher.

An' while we was wonderin' together if she'd fallen
 down out o' the skies,
An' whisperin' softly about it, she jes' opened up her
 sweet eyes.
Sort o' dazed she looked, an' unconscious, too weak
 fer ter try fer ter speak ;
But as Bill was a-bendin' over she jes' laid her hand on
 his cheek,

An' looked at him, straight an' intent-like, as if she
was tryin' ter place

Somethin' she had in her mem'ry, an' was huntin' fer
it in his face.

An' then she burst out a-cryin' an' sobbed, Oh, what
should she do?

An' Bill he spoke up like a parson, an' said we would
both see 'er through.

So high-falutin' an' booky he poured out his words fer
a while,

That finally she let up a-cryin', an' looked sort o'
minded ter smile.

But when she told us her story, about how th' train
was attacked,—

Wal, ye would 'a said if ye'd heard it that none o' th'
details it lacked;

An' how she escaped from ther clutches, an' set out
alone in th' dark,

Preferrin' th' wildcats an' grizzlies to men, red er
white, save th' mark!

Why, Bill, as he sot thar an' listened, jes' fell ter
a-pacin' th' floor,

An' when *she* thought he was coughin' it's *my* private
notion he swore!

But I tell ye we both on us reckoned th' angels had
guided 'er through,

Fer ter git ter that gulch in th' night-time was some-
thin' no live man could do,

Unless he had trapped in th' diggin's, an' had the
thing down purty fine.

Why, thar was only *one* chap as could do it in all o' old camp 49.

Wal, thar's no use a-tellin' how we searched fer th' rest o' th' train,

Fer all that we know ter this day is we jes' did our searchin' in vain.

But if ever th' Lord sent a woman fer to be an angel on earth,

That sweet little woman, our Mary, was one from th' hour o' 'er birth.

Th' men fell ter sprucin' up tidy, an' th' camp took ter lookin' so neat,

That every last trumper as come thar went away lookin' cheated an' beat.

We all on us made some acquaintance with combs an' our cleanest red shirts,

But 'twas plain ter be seen from th' outset that Mary wa'n't none o' yer flirts.

Fer Bill had th' whip-row, an' kep' it, an' quit all his swarin' an' drink,

Fer th' love o' a good little woman 'll brace a man more 'n ye think.

An' while some felt rather surly, thar couldn't none help but admit

That in pickin' a husband among us Bill Ed'ards was somehow th' fit.

It didn't take heavy discernment ter git at th' lay o' th' ground,

When ye seen 'er a-settin' an' blusheen' whenever that
Bill was around ;
An' as she sot thar a-lookin so purty, an' modest, an'
sweet,
It was plain that Bill he jes' worshipped th' stones that
was under 'er feet.

An' thar she was, all alone, 'ith never a word from 'er
kin,
A-waitin' as patient an' gentle, a-waitin' day out an'
day in,
An' sayin' "They'll be here th' next time, th' *next* time
they'll come without fail ;"—
But theirs wa'n't th' last disappearance as was known
on th' Overland Trail.

An' thar wa'n't no use ter be tryin' ter git away out o'
the camp,
Fer th' snow had blockaded th' mule-trains, an' pas-
sengers went on th' tramp.
An' it seemed that th' best way ter fix it was jes' ter
git married an' stay.
An' maybe thar wa'n't preparations in th' heart o' th'
Rockies *that* day !
Thar wa'n't no store in th' diggin's, except in th'
grocery line,
But we made up our minds that our Mary should jes'
have a chance fer ter shine.
So six on us tramped inter Deadwood, an' bought 'er a
rockin'-chair,
An' a blue silk gown, an' some fixin's that women
usually wear.

It guv us a stroll fer ter do it,—we was over a week on
th' way,—

But ye see we felt that our Mary wa'n't marryin' every
day.

Th' parson was skittish o' comin', but th' delegates
fetched him along;

If he hadn't a-come over quiet, we'd a-dragged him in
two hundred strong.

An' we gin 'em a heartier blessin' than most people
gits when they mates,

An' we felt thar was mighty few weddin's done up in
sich style in th' States.

Wal, Bill he was kind an' tender as ever a man could be,
An' if ever a woman appreciated, that 'ere woman was
she.

'Twas worth a week's work in th' diggin's ter spruce up
some blue sort o' night,

An' knock at Bill's cabin door-way, a-lookin' so cozy
an' bright;

An' thar would be Mary,—God bless 'er!—with a
smile an' kind word for us all;

Why, thar wasn't a dog in th' diggin's but loved 'er,
from great unto small.

To see 'er a-settin' an' mendin' a coat fer her "Willie,
my dear,"

Would a-made ye feel like som'thin' a-twixt a smile
an' a tear,

An' a-callin' that big Bill Ed'ards 'er "darlin'," an'
"good boy," too,—

A strappin' great feller a-weighin' two hundred an'
twenty-two!

Wal, maybe we didn't all love 'er, an' maybe we
didn't all feel
That a pleasant word from Mis' Ed'ards was better 'n
a good squar meal.
An' then she was always a-askin' if we didn't have
clothes fer ter mend,
An' a-doin' some little kind action, as if every man was
'er friend—
An' maybe they wa'n't, when I tell ye 'twould a-tickled
us all ter a charm
Ter 'ave laid down our lives any minute ter save Bill's
Mary from harm.

An' once when a murderin' hoss-thief was brought ter
be stretched ter a limb,
Our Mary spoke up like a gineral, an' jes' stood right
up thar fer him.
She said that all o' God's creatures had som'thin'
within' em o' good,
An' *all* o' our sins er our virtues th' good Lord alone
understood.
She talked like a meetin'-house preacher, only more
gentle an' kind,
An' every goll-darned old miner flopped over an'
changed o' his mind.
An' up spoke Jack Collins, th' spokesman:
 " Mis' Ed'ards, ye say fer ter mean
That this 'ere infernal old hoss-thief shall jes' git off
 slick an' clean?
It's jes' as yer say, Mis' Ed'ards, not as I spacially
car',

But he's th' boss o' th' bloodiest cusses thar is over
thar."

"Oh, yes, if you please, Mr. Collins," sez she, with
that sweet little smile,
That ter see it was worth a rough journey o' two er
three hundred mile.

"'Nough said," sez Jack; an' that hoss-thief broke
down an' bellered fer joy,
An' thar was Mary a-lookin' like a gold-piece 'ithout
th' alloy.

An' she sez,

"Poor man, if we're wicked, God asks us
to only repent,
Fer 'twas fer such sinners as *we* are th' blessed Saviour
was sent."

She said that, she did,—"*we* sinners." Why, that
hoss-thief he went on his knees,
An' we stood as dumb as our shovels, an' planted like
so many trees.

An' that blamed old hoss-thief says,—

"I don't know much about God,
But I've seen one o' his angels, an' that shows that *he*
isn't a fraud.
I'm mean as they make 'em, Mis' Ed'ards, but I'm
owin' o' you from to-day,
An' I ain't that sort o' a rascal as ever forgits fer ter
pay."

“Now skip !” roared Jack, an’ he skipped, rather
lively, ye’d better jes’ bet ;
But arter he’d slipped off so easy some fellers begins
fer ter fret.
Now Bill, I’d fergotten ter mention, had gone about
ten miles away,
Ter hunt up some chaps in th’ diggin’s as was owin’
him somethin’ ter pay.
An’ ’long about ten in th’ evenin’ Bill he rides up ter
th’ door,
A-lookin’ sorter pecoolyar, an’ as if thar was som’thin’
more.
I had ben down ter th’ cabin, more fer Bill’s comfort
an’ mine,
Although thar wa’n’t nothin’ ter harm ’er along o’
old camp 49,
An’ Mary she runs fer ter kiss him, an’ Bill he catches
’er tight,
An’ sez,
 “God bless you, my Mary, you’ve saved yer
 Will’s life, dear, to-night !”
An’ while she was lookin’ so startled, he points ter a
small squar o’ white
As was pinned up onter his shoulder, a-showin’ thar in
plain sight.
An’ Mary she unpinned th’ paper, an’ what d’ye think
that it said?
She stood up thar by th’ firelight, an’ this is jes’ what
she read :

“Received o’ that angel, Mis’ Ed’ards, one life on th’
first day of May ;

Herewith accept interest, accordin' ter verbal agreement ter pay."

Th' gang had got Bill in ther clutches, an' had a noose over his head,

When in rushed that durned old boss-devil they'd all on 'em took ter be dead.

Wal, maybe thar wasn't rejoicin', an' maybe we didn't all yell,

An' run fer Bill's cabin a-shoutin', an' cheer fer Bill's Mary a spell!

An' if thar had ben any grumblin', er if thar had ben any doubt

As ter whether we'd acted with wisdom,—wal, I reckon that receipt wiped it out.

But Mary wa'n't none o' yer strong ones, unless ye maught say in 'er mind,

An' thar she knew more'n twenty o' any blamed men ye could find.

An' we knew by an' by, as we watched 'er, that she had a call fer ter bear

A purty rough load fer th' diggin's, 'ithout any womanly care;

But she jes' went on sweeter an' sweeter, a-lookin' more saintly an' good,

An' while thar wa'n't nothin' ter offer, we all more er less understood.

An' th' doctor come over from Deadwood when 'twas all that his life was worth,

But all th' doctors together couldn't a-kept 'er here upon earth;

Fer we'd seen 'er too often a-musin', with that far-off
look in 'er eyes,
An' we knew she was only a-waitin' fer a call inter
Paradise.

Bill he was wild an' distracted, an' white as a ghost
with th' fright,

An' thar wa'n't no miner a-sleepin' in old 49 on that
night.

But along in th' gray o' th' mornin', as quiet as ever
ye see,

Sez Bill at my cabin' winder,—

"Pard, Mary is dead!" sez he;

"Come over at sun-up ter th' cabin."

An' then, jes' as quiet an' still,
He turns an' walks back. An', Kern'l, that was th'
last o' poor Bill.

We went, bare-headed an' quiet, an' knocked at th'
low cabin door,

A-chokin' because o' th' silence. It never was that
way before.

Thar wa'n't no answer; an', Kern'l, I felt a terrible
scare,

An' opened th' door jes' a little, and this was the
sight I see thar,—

Thar lay that beautiful angel, with a little dead babe
on 'er breast,

A-lookin' as peaceful an' quiet as if she'd laid down fer
ter rest;

An' *thar*, with a thirty-two bullet crashed inter his big,
han'some head,

With his arms around his dear Mary, Bill Ed'ards was
lyin' *thar*—dead!

An' onter a small piece of paper he was holdin' within
his cold hand,

Was writ this sort o' a message,—

“Boys, you will all understand,
An' bury th' three in one coffin. I can't bear th'
terrible load.

Mary has crossed th' Division, an' I'm—*somewhere*
upon th' long road.”

Th' sun was jes' up in th' mountains, an' out in th'
tree-tops a bird

Was a-singin' away ter th' mornin', an' th' Little Chick-
water was heard;

An' *thar* wasn't a man in th' number but felt somehow
terribly weak,

An' too sick an' faint with th' horror ter think o' a
word fer ter speak.

Wal, Kern'l, that pine-tree I show'd ye, 'a-fore it begin
ter git dark,

Has had a piece cut from its south side, an' onter that
place is a mark

O' a cross; an' beneath it, a-lyin' *thar* side by side,
Is Bill, an' Mary, an' Baby, gone over th' Big Divide.

A N I M M O R T E L L E.

An immortelle of a tender thought,—
A thought, but never a word,—
I will send to you from my soul to-night:
Are the lily's blossomings heard?
Is any pulse of the white day stirred
By the birth of a rose, or the death of a bird?

A thought,—the speech of the soul that lives;
A word,—the speech of the lips that die.
Deep calleth deep, soul calleth soul,
Through the voiceless language of wave or sigh.
Does the rose-breath speak as it passeth by?
As bees to the flower love's thoughts should fly.

E A S T E R.

FAR in the east, where morning, like a flower,
Grows on the hill-tops with the first spring green,
And in the west, where evening plucks the day,
Hour-petaled like a rose, with stars between,
Far doth the Easter dawning shine,
And Easter-eve, that thine and mine
May keep the mem'ry of a love divine.

Far in the north, where but the pines show green,
Like ivy-wreaths above the shroud of earth,
And in the south, luxuriant in her bloom,
Like Nature decked to keep a feast of mirth,—
Where plains, or seas, or forests roll,
Wherever dwells a human soul,
The Christ-truth resteth at its goal.

And far and wide, from Calvary around
The world to Calvary returned, the cross
Defines its shadow sharply 'gainst its light,
As human life defines its gain and loss.
Nile-lilies cluster round it there ;
But, sweetly fragrant everywhere,
Life lifts the lilies of a Prayer.

COLLIERY JIM.

IN the Shenandoah Valley, when the years that make
us old
Were yet drifting in that country whence no future
time is told,
I once knew an ancient miner in the mines at Raven
Run,
Who has told me many a story when his daily work
was done.
He was gray with time and labor, blackened with the
colliery's mark,
With that patient look men carry always working in
the dark.

I have wondered as I watched them going out of sight
and sound
Of the sunlight, and the bird-song, and the summer
over ground,
At what risk we gather treasures, at what peril men
must earn
Bread to feed their little children, should the father
not return.

Down the shaft, the daylight growing to a tiny square
of white,
Ever dimmer, dimmer, dimmer, now gone wholly out
of sight.
Down the shaft, the darkness creeping from the
shadows deep below,
And the dizzy, damp air swirling past their faces as
they go.
Going down into the darkness as the sun comes into
sight,
Coming up into the darkness as the sun goes down at
night.
One day out of seven spending where the blessed sun-
light falls,
Six days out of seven toiling in the dark at hidden
walls.

Colliery Jim was but a miner, delving in the earth for
coal,
But the darkness of his labors left no stain upon his
soul.

Like a giant he was fashioned,—limbs of iron and
muscles steel;
Heart as tender as a woman's for the woes that others
feel;
Strong, yet gentle, true and kind, with a record clean
and white
For the years and years he labored where the day is
always night;
Quick to act where others faltered, quick to see where
sight was dim,
And the gray old world was careless; faithful, noble
Colliery Jim.

In the Shenandoah Valley, where the sun came first in
sight,
And shone brightest through the daytime, and stayed
latest into night,
Stood a cottage on the hill-side, with a little vine-
wreathed door,
And a lilac at the window, and a baby on the floor,
Ever grasping at the sunlight with its little dimpled
hands,
Reaching vainly for the treasure that was blessing many
lands.
Who shaN say the baby's fancy, reaching for the fleet-
ing spark,
Was not somehow dumb compassion for the father in
the dark?
For the father who was thinking of his darling's happy
play,
Up above him in the sunshine and the blessed light of
day,—

Of the baby, and the mother, with her tender, loving eyes,

Thinking as we think of angels who are happy in the skies.
If a sigh into the darkness of the mine was ever heard,
That I know not ; busy people have scant time for idle word.

Day by day the time sped onward in that summer long ago ;

Years must pass and seasons vanish : roses die, yet roses blow.

Evening dusk began to gather, and the cottage lamps grew bright ;

Men were coming from the shadows up into the shades of night.

All the stars came out in silence, and the new moon climbed the hill

Where the whippoorwill was singing to the evening, dusk and still ;

But a dull and muffled rumble in the mountain-side was heard,

And men stopped, aghast and breathless, listening for that awful word,

“Fire-damp in the mines !” a message fraught with ruin swift and dire ;

Then a voice wailed through the darkness, “God of love, the mine’s on fire !”

Oh, that sudden, horrid danger in the darkness there a-lurk !

With white lips the women whisper, “Had the last shift come from work ?”

"No ; one gang is at the bottom!" huskily the men reply.

Does God hear the widows wailing and the new-made orphans cry?

How can all those stars stay shining in their distances so dim,

Making not one sign of pity when these voices cry to *Him*?

How can one fair summer evening hold the flower-breaths of the day,

When these human hearts are breaking for the dear ones gone away?

In the mines the men were driven, fainting, stifled, without hope,

Dumbly fleeing from the foeman whom no human strength could cope,

Till the final passage nearing, where an air-shaft gave them breath,

Silently they stood awaiting the approach of that red death.

At the passage-way a boulder, one huge mass of solid rock,

Years ago had sealed the chamber with its stony prison-lock.

Suddenly a whisper sounded, and their dull ears caught the word,

Like the voices of the angels ; promised life the miners heard.

"If that boulder could be lifted from its bed and rolled in place,

It would seal the spot securely!" Each looked in his fellow's face.

"We could dig a passage outward to the old mine at our right!"

Once again it seemed their life-hopes had come slowly into sight.

"Three strong men could hardly do it, cutting off their own retreat."

There was silence in the cavern; hearts could hear their neighbor's beat.

Then amidst the lurid shadows, making all the place less dim,

Towering like a grand archangel, rose the form of Colliery Jim.

"Mates, my strength alone can do it. One life is less worth than ten!"

No man spoke, but something sounded like a far-off, great "Amen!"

"Care for Rachel and the baby. Say Jim wa'n't afraid to die,—

With his last thought for his loved ones,—God be with ye, mates,—good-by!"

Was it but the red reflection of that awful death behind,

Like a halo round about him? That way look the angel-kind.

Stepped he back into the chasm, with that glory on his face,

Wrestled with the rock, and rolled it with his great strength into place.

At the sepulchre of Jesus angels rolled the stone away;
His own sepulchre that hero rolled the stone upon that
day.

* * * * *

In the Shenandoah Valley, where the stars shine far
and still,

Still the whippoorwill is singing to his mate upon the
hill.

Years and years have joined the many hastening after
vanished years,

But this story by the fireside still is told with loving
tears;

And the gray old world *is* careless, but our memories
never dim

When we think of our grand hero, faithful, noble
. Colliery Jim.

I N T R I N I T Y C H U R C H Y A R D,
N E W Y O R K.

How softly here the first spring sun
Calls forth the grass from its low bed,
Where many seasons seem as one
To those who, many years, are dead !

Life beats against its quiet walls
In clamorous roar, and sound, and strife,
But here within the sparrow calls
In mimic travesty of life.

Time was, when, where those buildings rise
In towering masses right and left,
One had a glimpse of wider skies
Than these by rock and mortar cleft.

Then from the church on Sabbath morn
Through its wide portals might be seen
Full many a field of lusty corn,
And many a meadow, cool and green;

Salt marshes where the rushes grew,
Ships anchored safely side by side,
With many a venture fitted to
The ebbing or the flow of tide.

And on those old-time days the swain,
As now, his dearest lady sought,
And through some fair and country lane
The mistress of his young heart brought.

His veins were full of youth's hot blood,—
Ah, life seemed fair those Sabbath-days,
When, first love rushing like a flood,
He walked with *her* through flowery ways.

'Twas here they loved, and here they wed,
And here their children's children came,
When they at last were dumb and dead,
To live, and love, and die the same.

For love grows old, and life grows gray,
And hearts that once with both were hot
Are cold as ours shall be some day,
When we with them have been forgot.

Unmissed they were not in their day,
Unmourned they were not for a time ;
A song forgot, a vanished May,
A thought but poorly set to rhyme.

And thou and I, a sound made still,
A link dropped off from Life's great chain,
Shall leave to others' work and will
That which we purposed here in vain.

Then softly, Life ; why beat and knock
Against these doors so loud and rough ?
Ah, overhead Time's ceaseless clock
Shall mark your day's end soon enough.

THE KING AND THE SHEPHERD.

HIGH sat the king on his royal throne,
But the king was weary ; said he, "I own
That all is vanity under the sun,
And the world's worn out that we live upon.
All things that we do have before been done ;
On the same old track must our race be run ;
I am tired of the whole of it, I, for one !"

On which the courtiers about the throne
With one accord fetched a dismal groan,
And looked to each other, and said aloud,
" *Ennui* is the penance for poor or proud."

But they walked aside with a smile and a wink,
As men who would say, "Now *here* is a kink !
What'll 'is 'ighness do next, d'ye think ?"

"Bring me the minstrel," his majesty said,
And forth on the errand a courier sped.
Of war, of beauty, of love and passion,
The minstrel sang in his good old fashion.
"Now, by our royal beard !" said the king,
"All things are old that men say or sing.
Is there not in the universe one new thing ?".

On which the courtiers, on either side,
Wagged their powdered heads and as one replied,—
"We're obliged to own it, when all is done,
There *is* no new thing under the sun."

"Ho, there !" cried the king. "Bring our prophet back.
"By my troth ! but he had a curious knack
Of telling us clearly the things we lack."
Lo ! a courier flies at the king's command,
And one has come from a distant land,—
My faith ! but he is a warrior grand,
We'll see his equal not soon again.
"They fought like heroes, they fell like men !"

He doffs the plumes from his stalwart head.
"'Tis the same old story," the tired king said :
"So many living, and so many dead ;
So many prisoners, and so many guns,—
'Tis a pity glory don't go by tons !
Ten tons of glory, two tons of lead,
Two hundred knighted, and ten thousand dead."

And the courtiers, wearing a willing yoke,
Anxious to humor all kingly folk,
Gave each other a nudge and a poke,
And roared, “By Jove! but that *was* a joke!”

The king sat under his golden crown,
The prophet came in his tattered gown.
“How now, O prophet. Do you profess
To believe there is any happiness?
Come now, out with it, own up, confess.”
And the courtiers swore, “By the good Queen Bess!
But the old chap’s in for it *now*, I guess.”

“I swear by my seal and my royal eye,”
Said the king, as the prophet made no reply,
“Were it not so worn out a trick to die,—
By my soul! But it’s something I’d like to try!”
The prophet listened with grave respect,
As one who would pause and first reflect
Before he risked his prophetic station,
And head, as well as his reputation,
On affairs concerning the king and the nation.

For full ten seconds he bowed his head,
But at last to the king, on the throne, he said,
“O king, had Fortune given you less
She had given more. What we now possess
We seldom prize. ’Tis the fate of life
That the human heart be with longing rife;
We envy our neighbor his lands, or wife,
Or some possession; if we had it
It might suit our notion, but ’tis not writ
That we should be happier a bit.

Yet a thousand things there are fair and new
That I could easily show to you,
If you would but take off your royal crown,
And exchange your robes for a tattered gown ;
I could show you happiness, pleasure, worth,
If you would forget you were king of the earth.”

Said the king, “ The very suggestion is new !
Fetch me the gown and I’ll go with you.”

So prophet and king set out together,
And their journey led them, no one knew whither.
Said the king to the prophet, “ You see, I’d rather—
If it’s just the same—have it pleasant weather.”
But the prophet answered his highness then,
“ We are common men among common men,
And what will be is but what has been.
As a king you could not control the rain,
And you might bid the sun to shine in vain.
We must take the days as they come,” said he,
“ For the world was not made for you or me.”

Over the hills lying far away,
Where sun and shadows forever play,
They journeyed forward for many a day.
They met a child by the road one morn,
Walking along between lines of corn.
“ Child, lov’st thou gold ? ” the prophet said,
And the glad child pondered, but shook his head.
“ I love the gold in the corn,” said he,
“ Or the yellow fruit on the orchard tree,
Or a buttercup flower in the field, maybe,
But that is all,” said he merrily.

“ Go thou in peace,” said the prophet then ;
“ Thy wisdom is greater than that of men.”

They met a maiden beside the road
As she sat to rest with her heavy load.
“ Art happy, daughter ? ” She smiled and said,
“ Ay, master ; the birds sing overhead,
The bells of the flocks ring through the day ;
I have my work and I have my play,
And each is sweeter because of both.”

“ A curious doctrine, now, by my troth ! ”
Said the king.

“ If you think my joys are small,
Why, I say my griefs live not at all.”
“ And you want for nothing ? ” “ Yea, that do I ;
But ’twill reach me some time,” she made reply,
“ For God is good, I can wait content.”
When the king and the prophet onward went,
They heard her singing adown the road
As she lightly carried her heavy load.

Then the prophet said, “ Upon yonder hill
Where the flocks roam ever to feed at will,
There sitteth a shepherd who pipes alone ;
At night his pillow is but a stone,
By day he sits on the rugged rocks,
And guardeth he ever his woolly flocks
From prowling beasts or tempests’ shocks ;
The hills and the sky are his castle walls,
His trumpets, the wind as it shrilly calls ;
He watches the dry leaf as it falls,

He watches the new one as it grows.
Unknown to glory, unsought by foes,
The works of Nature alone he knows.
No purple and linen to him belong,
His music is only the wild bird's song ;
No traitor lurks in the gentle throng
That own him master. Strong health, sweet sleep,—
What more could a king desire to keep
Than this shepherd has who guards his sheep?"

And pondering deeply the king replied,
" On my soul, so far as this world *I've* tried,
There's nothing to warrant that's being denied."

" No army standeth to save from harm :
He hath but the power of his strong young arm,
And that he is neither rich nor great
He hath much happiness had of Fate.
His strength and his flocks are his only wealth,
But he hath all blessings which come with health.
And owning neither houses nor land
His cares are small. No great hopes fanned
By worldly ambition, goad night and day,
But he sees the hills, and his flocks at play ;
His days in calm and in joy he will spend,
And in peace and contentment his life shall end."

The king went back to his royal throne,
But he thought of the shepherd sitting alone.
He thought of the hills, and the flocks at play,
The simple joys for the happy day,
The bare brown earth and the bare brown feet,
The bounding health, and the sleep so sweet,

And he often sighed for such happiness.
He said to his courtiers, “Troth ! I confess
That greater things have pleased me less.
Could I change place with that shepherd boy,
Give him my kingdom, and take his joy,
My worn-out world for his that is new,—
Faith, then, my lords, I should say to you,
‘What a thing it is to be rich and great,
Where health is wealth, and peace is state !
What a thing it would be to envy none
For any gift that may come to one !’

“Were that shepherd a king on my royal throne,
And I that shepherd upon a stone,—
Or were it writ in the fates to give
So much for so little,—why, as I live,
And *he* would change it, that too would I !”
And the courtiers said, with a careful sigh,
“It would be quite a novel thing to try.”

But the prophet spoke, and I’m free to own,
I believe it true as I make it known,—
“ ‘Tis the *heart* that’s contented upon a stone,
Or discontent on a royal throne.”

Said the courtiers aside, with a smile and a wink,
And a nod at each other, “Now here *is* a kink !
What’ll ‘is ’ighness do *next*, d’ye think ?”

A U G U S T.

THE meadow lilies' scarlet cheeks
Flame in the grasses like a blush
Upon the fields, whose heaving breast
The summer winds too roughly brush.

With gold enough to buy the world,
The yellow daisies line the way
The summer takes, across her lands
Whose little tenants never pay.

The warrior-thistle guards the graves
Of younger blossoms who have died ;
The clover, like two tented ranks,
In red and white, camp side by side.

The sensuous air, full, languid, warm,
Intoxicates us with a breath ;
Each marvellous pulse is thrilled to life
Which bears no hint of coming death.

A never-ceasing, hidden voice,
Which vibrates through the throbbing air,
Is but a million voices raised
From little singers everywhere.

Advance, advance, thou radiant thing !
Thou month of ripened sheaves and grain ;
Our memories press thee, like a rose,
Sweet twixt thy leaves of autumn lain.

LINES TO A TREE IN A CITY.

ALAS, poor tree ! thy fellows long
Have gone their way : few friends thou'st known ;
Here some chance bird may sing his song,
But none will nest ; thou art alone.

Around thy feet where once the grass
And tender sod was wont to press,
The stony pavements' noisy pass
Has driven them to nothingness.

The lonely prey of wintry sleet,
The buffet of the summer storm,—
Where art and man have built the street,
Thou only keepest Nature's form.

Begirt by rock, beset by stone,
A king without thy kingdom's right,
Thy followers are overthrown,
Their day is in tradition's night.

Dost thou from thy high branches search
Throughout the weary length of street
For some old friend ?—But tower, and church,
And endless block thy glances meet.

What memories, couldst thy branches speak,
What pictures wouldst thou ope to view,
Of woodland places thy dreams seek,—
Of meadow-reaches thy youth knew !

But, doomed by some untoward fate,
To live when all thy friends are dead,
Dost thou not feel thou'st stayed too late,
And so must die uncomforted ?

Yet this much may thy lone heart know :
That hearts by human cares made sad,
In watching thy green branches grow
Have oftentimes been cheered and glad.

Such comfort man finds when his day
Outreaches its slant, setting sun,
And he sees, sadly, pass away
Those lives which fresh with his begun.

Yet down this endless brownstone lane,
This dreary reach of monotone,
Ah, thou mayst look and look in vain
For thine own kin ;—thou art alone.

THE LEOPARD OF CAPO DI MONTE.

I.

At Capo Di Monte, a leopard, was wont in the days
lang syne,
To read with a brutish instinct the earthquakes' mystic
sign.
Whether in sultry hazes, or clouds on volcanic rims,
When the air grows dense and the landscape in sudden
vagueness dims,

Or whether that subtle liquor in the veins of brute,
or man,
In the beast can mark the signal that the human never
can,
And knows when Nature's warning proclaims earth
under ban,
Who knows? The world progresses, but we sometimes
lose the signs
By which man crude and savage earth's secret heart
divines.
We grow away from Nature. But is growth worth the
cost,
When in learning lesser science the greater truth is lost?

II.

Heavy above fair Naples and over its crescent bay
The smoke from old Vesuvius like a frown on a fair
face lay.
At Capo Di Monte the keeper of the leopard said to
his wife,
As she scolded the dusky babies, sprawling in noisy strife,
“Juno is fierce and restless.” As he spoke, at the
bars of her cage,
Tawny, ferocious, audacious, she bounded in supple rage.
“Enough of that, mi ladi,” said the keeper, and
with his whip
Reached through the bars and struck her. Like a flash,
with a snarling lip,
Claws wide, and ears down-flattened, the great cat stood
at bay,
With the yellow lightnings flashing from her eyes in
an evil way.

III.

“Nay, Tony, do not beat her,” said the wife, and the children stared
 At the crouching, incarnate devil that out of the shadow glared.

“I’d teach her!” cried the keeper, “but I’m faint and sick to-day.”

Slinking, abject, and fearful, the leopard crept away,
 And roared in sullen terror in her cage’s darkest nook.

“If forty demons had her,”—the iron bars roughly shook,

And the leopard cowered in quiet. “What’s that?” Antonio said,

Then screamed in sudden terror as the roof gaped overhead.

IV.

“The earthquake, O the earthquake!” shrill voices cry around,

Half muffled by the rumbling, that hollow, awful sound,

As if a thousand caverns were yawning underground,—
 As if a thousand demons were clamoring underneath,
 While the smoke from old Vesuvius was weaving a funeral-wreath.

V.

Into the streets and highways, white, reeling, the people ran;

When the earth, God’s work, is shaken, how fareth the works of man?

Into the open country, out to the field and plain,
 Shrieking, falling, seeking for the solid earth in vain;

For it rose with a sea-sick motion, and fell with a wave-like slide,
While the very sky seems tottering as the rock-girt lands divide.

VI.

When back to his fallen dwelling, days after, the keeper came,
Half starved, the leopard Juno replied when he called her name,
And crept to the bars of her prison, and fawned in her cat-like way.
“ Mary Mother, protect us ! ” the keeper was heard to say,
“ But I hoped the beast was famished. I fear her. No brute is she,
But an evil witch-cat trying her black art over me ! ”

VII.

Thrice after the cat gave warning, thrice after the keeper fled,
And returned to his fallen dwelling hoping to find her dead.
But up to the bars of her prison, half starved and weak she came,
When faltering through the darkness the keeper pronounced her name.
He prayed to the Holy Virgin, he prayed to each saint he knew,
That this evil prophet of earthquakes with life might soon be through.

He burned no end of candles, his tears would have turned a mill,
But in health and right good spirits the cat was purring still.
So, as all the Saints petitioned seemed busy with other prayers,
And as he who wins a contest is he who something dares,
He added a dose of poison to the candles and tears,— they say,—
And lo! the prayers were answered, with no prolonged delay.

VIII.

Heavy above fair Naples, and over its crescent bay,
The smoke from old Vesuvius like a frown on a fair face lay.
And back and forth in anguish, in the pain of death, not rage,
The leopard Juno bounded in the hold of her narrow cage.
Then gloatingly the keeper crept up to watch her death;
“ May the witches claim thee, Juno ! ” he muttered, beneath his breath.
Up to the bars of her prison with gazing eyes she crept,
And mutely looked upon him. Another man had wept,
But Antonio, wrathful, fearful,—“ May thy black art die ! ” he said.
Was it a flash of lightning, or the roof that yawned o’erhead ?

And this reeling, dizzy feeling, this swaying from side
to side,—

With claws widespread the leopard stretched out her
length and died.

IX.

When into that ruined dwelling, days after, the
searchers came,

Pinned fast to the earthen flooring by the cage's iron
frame,

Antonio, the keeper, lay dead as that other beast,
Upon whose dying anguish he crept that night to feast.

X.

Ah, well, the world progresses, but we sometimes lose
the signs

By which man crude and cruel earth's secret heart
divines.

We grow away from Nature. But is growth worth the
cost,

When in learning lesser science some greater truth is
lost ?

A CRYSTAL MORNING.

A KING came in the darkness with all his knightly
train,

His heralds riding swiftly on their chargers of the
rain.

We did not heed the voices, shut in so close and
warm,
That wailed through sleet and shadow, the voices of
the storm.

We heard the evening weeping outside the curtained
pane ;
We heard her soft tears falling, the tear-drops of the
rain.
The wind, high-priest of winter, was chanting from the
shrine,
And solemnly responded the organ of the pine.

The lights gleamed on the altar in gold against the blue,
Through clouds like incense rolling,—the storm's high
mass was through.
And when the stars had faded, the incense rolled away,
From the dim east approaching we saw the perfect day.

Ah, in that crystal morning, which sparkled in the sun,
We marvelled how in darkness such dainty work was
done.

The deft nuns of the night-time such wondrous beads
had strung,
And o'er each branch and tree-trunk their rosaries had
flung.

O frozen rain of winter ! like diamonds and rare gems,
Whose like has never yet been set in earthly diadems.
I thought how from life's sorrows, where bitter snows
have lain,
May spring some perfect jewel from every tear of pain.

How frost, and storm, and darkness must compass us around,
Before the hidden treasures within each soul are found ;
How on that Crystal Morning which dawneth after years
The glories of our Heaven may be our life-storm's tears.

THE SILENT CHORD.

WHERE shall I look for the hidden chord ?
When will its harmonies come to me,
Full of all beauty of time and tune,
The pæan of immortality ?
Eye cannot see what the ear may hear,
Ear may not hear what the eye can trace,—
One for the voices of street and field,
One for the beauties of field and face.

Where shall I search for the hidden sound ?
Where shall I look for its secret life,
Startle it out of its silent peace
Into the clamor of tuneful strife ?
Alas ! as deep as the pearl that lies
Under its fathoms of ocean brine,
Is the chord my nature has always lacked,—
The harmonies mute which had been divine.

Lost ! in the depths of a dreamer's soul,
The golden link of a wondrous tune ;
Carved as the angels carve their crowns,
Sweet as the roses of fadeless June.

Found ! in the choir of an unseen land,
Voiced by the singers of heavenly lore,
The golden link of the missing chord
That my soul shall lack no more.

MY CHILDREN.

I sit at my work in the afternoon,
When the day is drowsy with dust and heat,
And out of my window I watch the line
Of shimmering sun on the well-worn street.
I mend the jackets and little gowns,
Worn with playing and rent with tears,
And every stitch which my needle takes
Is set with a mother's voiceless prayers.

But after the shadows are growing long,
And the glare fades out of the dusty street,
With happy laughter the children come,
With ringing voices and flying feet.
And my heart leaps up with a sudden bound ;
My children are coming home from school.
I rise and watch with an eager hope
The long white road growing dusk and cool.

Guy, and Hobie, and little Louise,—
I shall see them come through the shady lane ;
And Claire is away at a higher school,—
Ah, what is it comes with a sudden pain ?

I hear my darlings, I see them both,—
Both, I say, when it should be three,—
Hobie, my son, and little Louise;—
Ah, “suffer *thy* children to come unto me.”

Day after day I cheat my ears
When the children clamor with laugh and shout;
Day after day I cheat my eyes,
Waiting and watching when school is out;
For Claire is gone to a higher school,—
But Guy, my darling, my precious Guy,
With his laughing eyes and his loving heart,
Guy has gone to a school *more high*.

Oh, for the breadth of a little grave !
Oh, that it ever was dug so deep !
And yet, were it sunk through a thousand worlds,
I never could picture him there asleep.
When the snow is deep and the frost lies thick,
And the road is gleaming more coldly white,
I think, “My children will all come home,—
All, when the school is out to-night.”

And when the rush of the wild spring-rain
Awakens me with its sobs deep,
I say, “In the little room up-stairs
My boys are dreaming in happy sleep.”
How can I think in his lonesome grave
My darling is lying so still and white,
With rain-washed grasses and wind-swept flowers,
And dripping darkness alone to-night ?

O Father, forgive me my human love !
Its death was bitter, its life was sweet ;
But that long white road leading past the stars
Was best of all for my darling's feet.
And when I watch from immortal heights
For Claire, and Hobie, and little Louise,
God grant I hear, with immortal ears,
“ The kingdom of Heaven is such as these.”

I LOVED YOU ONCE.

I LOVED you once ; but now, alas !
The flame is out, the hearth is cold.
Love could not leap the chasm set ;
It missed its purpose, lost its hold,
And in the pit of doubt it fell.
Ah, doubt to Love is Love’s death-knell !

I loved you once ; but as a rose
Fades from its summer into clay,
And never more may bloom the same,
So Love lies in its grave to-day.
No resurrection may aspire
To raise again its dead desire.

I loved you once ; you flung me doubt,
And basely dealt untruths’ sharp thrust.
How deep the wound the scar will show
Where Love is stabbed through its own trust.
You dug its grave, then why regret ?
Tears bring not back the sun that’s set.

THE FACE OF THE AGES.

Lo, the white face of the ages,
Reading from the book of doom,
Where the years are fluttering pages,
And the letters each a tomb !

I, a mote in some slant ray-beam,
I, a worm upon the leaf,
Wonder which is truth or day-dream,
Which belief, which unbelief?

I, a breath, a word, a fashion,
Here to-day, to-morrow—where?
Breathless with all human passion,
Red with joy, white with despair ;

I, a soul ! O topping wonder,
Arch of every mortal span !
Bridged by that the gulf out yonder
Is but depth whose height is man.

I, born an immortal spirit,
Seeking truth, or what *is* true,
Circling sometimes close and near it,
Sometimes with it lost to view :—

I, born heir to all tradition,
Joint inheritor of words,—
Shall I find in light perdition ?
Shall I perish like the herds ?

If that strangely weak alliance—

Strange, how weak such power can be !—
Which exists 'twixt faith and science,
Should confuse and puzzle me ;

If I find in time and season

Knowledge fitting either case,
Proving faith, or proving reason,
Which shall have the foremost place ?

Reason ! God-gift to us given,

Greatest of his boons to man !
Shall it bar us out of Heaven,
Shall it place us under ban ?

Reason, seal of soul immortal,

Sign and signet of God's grace !
Shall it close Heaven's glorious portal
And condemn us from our race ?

With this gift beasts were our equal ;
With it not man were but brute.

Shall it have no better sequel ?
Shall it bear so bitter fruit ?

Many faiths for many people,
Tolerance their chiefest gem :

Calls from minaret or steeple,—
Who shall dare to question them ?

Many gods for many nations :

Faith a chariot, *not* a load,
Carrying all to different stations
Built upon the same Great Road.

Doctrine. 'Tis a trick of singing
An old hymn to some new tune.
So the seasons go on bringing
Fair new flowers to deck old June.

If to us the stars look little,
Tiny torches of the sky,
Do we take one jot or tittle
From their size as they flash by?

Are they less great worlds for seeming
Tiny specks of fire at night
To some idle mortal, dreaming
That they vanish with the light?

Do *they* suffer limitation
From the limits of *our* eyes?
We—the atoms of creation,
They—the giants of the skies!

Dwells there not a race of pygmies
In those distant spheres to-day,
Deaf alike to praise or stigmies
Other pigmy races pay?

Their world shall with ours continue
After thou and I shall pass:
We are neither bone nor sinew:
We are rather leaf and grass.

What availeth then our railing
At the unseen power of might?
Does the helpless infant's wailing
Vex the star that shines so bright?

Thus the power which brought us thither
Shall in time so take us hence ;
Who shall say when, how, or whither ?
Death is but life's consequence.

If the plan of that creation,
With no limit to its power,
Limits man in his salvation,
Where is his eternal dower ?

Can dear love, which hath created,
Willingly its child destroy ?
Man to wrong and right was fated ;
Good is gold : sin its alloy.

God is love, and faith is reason,
Difference, a two-edged sword,
With its double-bladed treason,
Hacking, cutting, at *The Word*.

Can the true man not be tolerant,
Or the generous still be just ?
What if creeds be like or different
If their base is in one Trust ?

We, believing in one entry
Through death's door to living birth,
Shall we set a surly sentry
Challenging our fellow's worth ?

Saying, “Lord, *this* is thine leaven,
This, his brother, cast away.”
We, joint heirs of earth and heaven
Through our Fellowship of Clay.

Many roads for many races :
All men clad with love and trust,
With one lightning on their faces,
While their feet are in one dust.

LITTLE JACK TWO-STICKS.

'TWAS a terrible day, and we spent it fighting the third division of Hill's command
In the Wilderness ; then, just as night was falling, we finished the combat hand to hand.
Our ranks were thinned, and the men had fasted hour after hour of the hard-fought day,
With canteens empty, and knapsacks lying on the ground in camp when we marched away.

Corporal Hunt had stood beside me all through the fight as our men went down,—
That tall, blue grain in its long swathes lying, hiding the earth where it *had* been brown.
The cleft twigs dropped from the trees above us, cut by the bullets which whistled there,
And with labored breathing we clambered forward, muttering sometimes a curse or prayer.

Little Jack Two-Sticks, the company's drummer,—you see we had nicknames among the boys,—
Was drumming away at my left, and helping to deaden the shriek of those leaden toys.

Jack was a lad, and a little fellow about the size of my
youngest girl
I had left at home ; eyes the same color, and hair that
was always trying to curl.

“Look at that boy !” the corporal shouted. “Look at
that little chap drumming away !”
And we sort of smiled in each other’s faces. “He
takes it as cool as if it was play !”
And the powder-grimed face of the corporal softened,
then suddenly hardened, and down he fell.
“What ! Hunt, are you hit ?” But he made no
answer, and I heard in the front the rebel yell,
And our colonel shouting, “Charge bayonets, men !”
I rushed through the thicket to take my part,
Leaving the corporal lying quiet with a minie-ball
lodged in his gallant heart.

We fought and we won with the little handful left of
our brave old Company G.
Our colonel dropped, half rose, and shouted, “Follow
them, boys ! Not a man stays with me.”
But after the cannon had stopped their rattle, and after
the bullets had ceased their play,
And we searched for our comrades, I heard the drum-
ming of little Jack Two-Sticks far away.

Queer that Jack wasn’t up with the company, as the
sharp tattoo of his drum we heard,
But it suddenly changed to a muffled long-roll, and
five of us started without a word

And followed the sound through the Wilderness shadows. There, with his back to a fallen tree, And six of his comrades dead around him, he was beating the long-roll for Company G.

“Why, Jack, old chap, are you hurt?” we questioned; his jacket was torn and the front was red.

I thought of my girl as I watched him faintly beating the long-roll there to the dead.

“How did it go—who beat?” he whispered. “We saved the day at the last—we won!”

“Write to mother about it”—his hands fell lifeless, and little Jack Two-Sticks’ drumming was done.

The night came down with its blessed quiet, and I said a prayer for my little girl,

And the little chap in the darkness sleeping, with hair too stiffened with blood to curl.

But of all the sights that the Wilderness shadows were trying to hide as the smoke-clouds fled,

The saddest of all was that little fellow beating the long-roll there for the dead.

RETROSPECT.

THE sallow sun lay on the fading hills,
Fanning his hot brow with the evening breeze.
A few more circuits and the year is run;
How shall I know if love is lost or won?
How know what day will bring till day is done?

There is a road as still as buried life,
Which I have trodden to its outmost rim ;
No sound clangs silence round me as I pass,
No crickets chirping in the short, dry grass ;
Naught but a wailing wind which shrills—“ alas ! ”

There are two silences which hush their way on earth ;
One springs of deathless thought grown tired of love,
One lies with thoughtless death, gaunt, haggard, lean ;
How shall I know which silence lies between
The trackless roads of the Unseen and Seen ?

I look until my eyes are strained and dim ;
I listen till the silence rings with pain.
I may not find a rose grown in the deep,
But I can gather poppies while you reap,
And winds which wailed alas ! may whisper—“ sleep ! ”

INDIAN SUMMER.

WHEN the maple-leaves turn yellow,
 And the sumac dusky red ;
When the forest’s crimson life-blood
 Stains the branches overhead ;
When the smoky Indian summer
 Spreads its haze upon the hills,
And October’s gorgeous raiment
 Mirrors glory in the rills ;
Think I of the legend telling
 How the autumn-summer came ;

How it happened that the season
Bears the dusky red man's name.

How the savage, driven westward
By the white man years ago,
Toiling with faint heart and heavy,
Through the northern winter's snow,
Found the noble Mississippi,—
Pitched his wigwam on its shore,—
By the Father of all Waters,
Till the winter should be o'er.

There the game was for the arrow,
There the fish was for the spear ;
Forest's fruits and water's treasures
Plenteous were their hearts to cheer.
There they lingered through the winter,
Through the summer stayed they still,
And the colors of the autumn
Spread its glory on the hill.
Then the chieftain called his people
All around and to them said,—

" O my people, we have travelled many leagues !
Many moons have found us fasting,
Many winters found us cold ;
Many summers brought us famine ;
Let the warriors who are old
Build a fire to the Great Spirit—
Make a smoke of thanks to him—
For the moons of plenty sent us,
That shall make the sky grow dim."

Then the aged men together
 Built a fire upon the plain,
Thrice replenished it in daytime,
 In the night-time thrice again,
'Till the smoke in mighty columns
 Upward rose, and dimmed the sky.
Then the youths, with faces northward,
 Shot their feathered arrows high ;
And the maidens, facing northward,
 Scattered maize and chanted loud,
While the smoke rolled on and upward
 In an ever-darkening cloud.

The Great Spirit in his wigwam
 Far to northward, sitting still,
Sends this token every autumn,
 To his children, of good will.
But the pale-face pressing westward
 Drives the red man farther on,—
Toward the farther ocean rolling,
 Toward the setting of the sun.

And the Spirit, grieving sorely
 For his people's dying race,
Northward, southward, eastward, westward,
 Sends the smoke from place to place.
Says the red man,—“The Great Spirit
 Smokes the peace-pipe ! It is well !”

And the haze outspreading ever,
Over field and over river,
Shows the maple-leaves red-golden,

Shows the sumac's vivid blushes ;
Shows the yellow willow-rushes,
Shows the oak-leaves' crimson brownness,—
Dimming brightness, adding softness,
Giving beauty and completeness
To the richness and the sweetness
Of the late but welcome comer,
Hazy, lovely, Indian Summer.

SCOTCH HEATHER.

JUST a sprig of Scottish heather, in a letter where the
tears,
Which have blotted words together, have been dried
these many years.
Loving lines, yet sadly cheerful,—how "'twas lone-
some here to-day ;'"
Then a pause, a little tearful, " Dear, you are so far
away ! "

Every sentence has its token of a love that could not
fail,
Throbbing with a faith unspoken, though the ink is
growing pale ;
Faded are the lines, dim-lettered like sad ghosts upon
the page ;
Ah, that poor love should be fettered with the rusty
iron of age !

Then that line, "I picked the heather from that spot,
dear, you will know,—
Where we walked and talked together,—oh, it seems
so long ago!"
And at last,—"Love, how much better it will be when,
by and by,
We'll not need to write a letter to each other, you and
I."

God! With what another meaning that one line has
long been true,
With Death's silence intervening since I last have heard
from you.
When you dropped Life's weary fetters, when you went
so far away,—
Thought you of unwritten letters I was missing from
that day?

If you know how I have needed some new token
through the years
You have slept away unheeded, it must move your
soul to tears.
If you still know how I love you, how I've missed you,
day by day,
Since the heather grew above you, you could never
stay away.

Take all treasures, Time, I cherish, Fame, and Hope,
and Life at last,
Flitting things which needs must perish,—spare this
memory of the Past,

Lying with a sprig of heather, in a letter, where the
tears
Which have blotted words together, have been dried
these many years.

TWO LIVES.

TIME laid his hand on the budding leaf:
It turned to crimson, then brown and gold.
He touched the grain ; 'twas a garnered sheaf,
A laden bin,—and the year was old.

You walked in the sun when Time was young :
I grew in the shade and was ever old ;
My life at last to the daylight sprung,
And yours—crept under the graveyard mould.

Two ways, two lives, two leaves of years,
A sudden cloud, and a glare of sun ;
Written in passion, erased in tears !
Is the chapter ended, or but begun ?

WHEN LOVE WENT PAST.

I NEVER knew when love went past,
Else had my watching not have been in vain.
There was no token of it first or last ;
Mysterious as the coming of the rain,
Unheralded it came, and went again.

I had been watching for a face
Which I might know along my daily way :
But as the wind goes, leaving not a trace,
It suddenly swept past me, like a day
Which dawns so full of sun, but cannot stay.

By all the tokens I had heard,
I thought my heart would know it when it came.
But without pause, or sign, or passing word,
Like some sweet flower which never speaks its name,
It came and went away. Who was to blame ?

ODE TO A MUMMY.

THOU cerement wrapped, thou still Egyptian dead,
Well hast thou stood the on-march of the years—
Well, since thy body baffles their decay !
Why art thou yet, thou strange, mysterious thing,
Still bearing semblance of a shape divine,
When millions of thy fellow-kind since thee
Have crumbled with the ages back to dust ?

What was thy deed, thy hope, thy life, thy death,
Thou senseless victim of corroding Time ?
Wast maid, or man, when life throbbed through thy
veins ?
Wast young, or old, when Death fulfilled thy end ?
Thou lotus-eating wight from yonder Nile,

Whose sunny shores so fitly framed thy day,
Hadst thou a light heart in that hollow cave
Thy scanty ribs now seek in vain to hide?
Didst kingly diadem entwine that brow
Whose shrunken skull now brownly marks the place
Where once thy busy brain its schemes wrought out?
Gave birth to plots which never brought thee weal,
Or still-born dreams which perished ere they lived,
And all thy lesser thoughts of daily life?
Thy brainless skull its secrets hide so well
That living empty heads and wagging tongues
Are put to shame beside thy subtile depth.

What language filled that mouth whose vacant space
Grins up its ghastly mirth at man's surmise?
And framed it words of power, or slavish tones,
The poet's romance, or the sage's wit?
O cipher, out of all the earth's great sums!
Thick with the dust of stealing centuries,
How bafflest thou Time's rust, and rot, and worm,—
How keep the form which sunny Egypt knew?
If thou wert king, where is thy kingdom now?
Hath it passed on into the shades with thee,
And art thou king amidst thy shadows still?
Hath Time, in irony of thy poor life,
Preserved thee thus within thy shroud of years,
A silent sermon by the hand of Fate,
Which writes thee on a page thou couldst not read?

Where are the empty baubles of thy day,
Gold, glory, heart's love, which thou couldst not keep?
If thou wert man, where is thy manhood now?

If thou wert queen, where glows thy jewelled crown
Which thou didst love? Who wears thy gems to-day?
If thou wert wife, hast thou a wisely art
Amidst the ghosts in Pluto's nightly realm?

Thou answerest not. All questions are in vain.
And I who question thee,—if some chance voice
Shall find my silences long ages hence,
And yearn to turn my slumber into speech,
Then will I make reply to them as thou
Hast made reply to me. Man, pass thou on!

Thy musty fingers brown the skirts of Time,
Like ghosts of leaves from out a vanished fall.
Thy ragged garment closes in the door
Whose hinges swung two thousand years ago;
And blown by winds from its dark sepulchre,
Rustles mysterious of man's flitting life,
As some night wind from now may shrill adown
Some coming age, and bear a hint of ours.

RAIL NOT AT LOVE.

RAIL not at love! whoever breathes
As wisely may deny his breath,—
That subtile power, that flitting thing,
That barrier frail 'twixt life and death.

Rail not at love ! who is not made
From tenderest infancy to know
Its mighty hand is like a flower,
Seared at the roots, that may not grow.

First love is Mother's ; after that
It widens as our lives expand,
And father, brother, sister, friend,
All come within its sacred band.

And after that,—our hearts grow so,
Some other fellow's sister we
Find slipped within that magic line,
And life is sweet for what *may be*.

And after that,—it comes to pass
That Heaven is not so far away,
Nor so remote from human life
As some disgruntled folks may say.

And after that,—Love still goes on ;
Our children claim their rightful share ;
And though we give so much away,
We still have worlds on hand to spare.

And after that,—as they grow up,
And we grow old, love still must grow,—
Forever reaching out and up,
For Heaven, and God is love, you know.

THE WINTER STORM.

IN drifting clouds the snow sweeps by ;

The icy insects of the storm

On Winter's mission swiftly fly

In a resistless, stinging swarm.

Dull and opaque the sky has grown ;

In flitting ranks through field and wood,
Where seeds of frost are thickly sown,

The snow-bird searcheth for his food.

In far, vague drifts the high hills lie,

A veil of frozen mist between.

The wind's cold messengers flit by

From out the Seen to the Unseen.

Fit emblem of mortality,

Short-lived and stormy winter's day !

Man, seeking his eternity,

Thus dawns, and wanes, and fades away.

SLEEP.

O SLEEP ! thou dim, retreating, other-self of death !

Thou rapturous, sweet counterpart of rest entire !

Thou language which we learn just bit by bit,

In order to bespeak our passage yonder !

Thou kind interpreter 'twixt every soul on earth

And its beyond—its far hereafter !
How well we know thy soft, preparing hand,
Smoothing the weary pillows of our lives
To teach unruly man his destiny !

Our wakeful days pass into night. Our lives,
A wakeful period of doubt, and trust,
Of labor and repose, pass into death
Through thy calm medium which lies between.
The lesson of that after-silence taught
By thy dumb peacefulness on earth, we learn
In thy mute language :—learning it, we know
The peace of God hath been bestowed in sleep.

THE SURRENDER OF NEW ORLEANS.

ALL day long the guns at the forts,
With far-off thunders and faint retorts,
Had told the city that down the bay
The fleet of Farragut's war-ships lay ;
But now St. Philip and Jackson grim
Were black and silent below the rim
Of the southern sky, where the river sped
Like a war-horse scenting the fight ahead.

And we of the city, the women, and men
Too old for facing the battle then,
Saw all the signs of our weakness there
With a patience born of a great despair.
The river gnawed its neglected bank,
The weeds in the unused streets grew rank,

And flood and famine threatened those
Who stayed there braving greater woes.

Under the raking of shot and shell
The river fortresses fighting fell ;
The Chalmette batteries then boomed forth,
But the slim, straight spars of the ships of the North
Moved steadily on in their river-road,
Like a tide that up from the ocean flowed.

Then load after load, and pile upon pile,
Lining the wharves for many a mile,
Out of the cotton-presses and yards,
With a grim industry which naught retards,
The bales were carried and swiftly placed
By those who knew there was need of haste,
And the torch was laid to the cotton so.
Up from that bonfire the glare and glow
Was seen by the watchers far away,
And weeping and wailing those watchers say,
“ The city is lost ! O men at the front,
Braving the fortunes of war, and the brunt
Of battle bearing with fearful cost,
The city you loved and left is lost ! ”

Ah, memories crowding so thick and fast,
Ye were the first ; is this the last ?
We gave with clamor our first great gift,
With shouts which up to the heavens lift ;
We gave with silence our last best yield,
Our last, best gleanings for Shiloh’s field.

With mute devotion we saw them go ;
 But when the banners were furled and low,
 And the solid columns were thinned by war,
 We wondered what we had given for.

And oh, the day when with muffled drum
 We saw our dear, dead Johnston come !
 The blood of our slain ones seemed to pour
 From the eyes that should see them come no more.
 We measured our grief by each gallant deed ;
 We measured our loss by our direful need ;
 Our dead dreams rose from the vanquished past,
 And across the future their shadows cast.
 Our brave young hope, like a fallen tear,
 We laid on the grave of our Chevalier.

And that last wild night ! the east was red
 So long 'fore the day had left its bed.
 With white, set faces, and smileless lips,
 We fired our vessels, we fired our ships.
 We saw the sails of the red flame lift
 O'er each fire-cargo we sent adrift ;
 To Farragut's fleet we sent them down,
 A warm, warm welcome from the town.

But, alas, how quickly came the end !
 For down the river, below the bend,
 Like a threatening finger shook each mast
 Of the Yankee ships as they steamed up fast.
 Grim and terrible, black with men,
 Oh, for the *Mississippi* then !

And—God be merciful!—there she came,
A drifting wreck, a ship of flame.
What a torch to light the stripes and stars
That had braved our forts and harbor bars!
What a light, by which we saw vainly slip
Our hopes to their death in that sinking ship!

We shrieked with rage, and defeat, and dread,
As down the river that phantom sped;
But on the deck of a Yankee ship,
One grim old tar, with a smiling lip,
Patted the big black breech of his gun,
As one who silently says, “Well done!”

To-day the graves that were new are old,
And a story done is a story told;
But we of the city, the women and men,
And boys unfitted for fighting then,
Remember the day when our flag went down,
And the stars and stripes waved over the town.
Ah me! the bitter goes with the sweet,
And a victory means another defeat;
For, bound in Nature’s inflexible laws,
A glory for one is another’s *Lost Cause*.

PAN AND THE FLOCKS.

THE patches of snow on the steep hill-side,—
Like flocks of sheep, changing pasture-ground,
And seeking the river, all melt and hide,
As if they followed some magic sound.

And I for one, think the great god Pan
Is piping away in the realms of man :
Else why should the lambs of the winter run
Away from the yellow dogs of the sun ?

And where is the shepherd for all these sheep ?

And where has he gone with his fife and crook ?
Oh, I think the sluggard must be asleep,
That he lets his flocks run into the brook !
Oh, I think he is paying but little heed,
While Pan is piping away on his reed,
And coaxing the sheep into stolen marches :
The sly old wizard amongst the larches !

Run off, silly sheep ! the shepherd's asleep,

And nobody knows that the grass is growing.
The gray little pussies are climbing the steep
Round wand of the willow ;—the flowers are blowing.
The bright blue eyes of the woods are awake ;
There's a deal of gossip amidst the brake ;
There's gay little voices jeering the sheep
Who have for their shepherd a boy who's asleep.

There's queer little craft a-sail in the sky,—

There's butterfly-ships, and brown-bee-canoes,
And black little pirates with tempers awry,
And swords in their belts which I know they can use.
And look ! who'd believe it ? The hill-sides are green,
And white little lambkins a-frisking are seen ;
And now I am sure that the great god Pan
Is piping away to the flocks of man !

WE HAVE OUR DAY.

WE have our day : no flower elects
 The spot where 'tis ordained to grow ;
Some corner in the field to fill,
It may not blossom at its will,
 Its end it may not hope to know.

What bird its summer-time may choose,
 Or know the purpose of its song ?
The eagle sings not as the lark,
To whom a listening world will hark,
 Yet equal gifts to him belong.

We have our day : in it we live,
 In it we grow, if life be true.
The accident of birth may place
One further forward in the race,
 Yet *merit* wins when it is through.

We have our day : all other time
 Is useless till it draws as near.
To-day with all its power is mine,
To-day with all its power is thine,
 To-morrow—no man's, 'till 'tis here.

THE DRUMMER-BOY'S BURIAL.

THE damp breeze of the morning drifted up from off
the sea.

Far in the distant east a leaden sky of dreary gray
Pressed back and rudely barred the entrance of the
dawn.

And dimly seen, the black masts of the fleet, the men-
of-war,

Pierced through the ghostly mist, each taper spar
fine, long,

Like some gigantic needle stitching down its shroud
of fog

Around the sea.

Upon a little cliff they made his grave.
At right the river flowed. How it had come from far,
Dim forests, peaceful in their hush, and filled with shy,
wild things

Which bounded through the flowers, and found within
the shade

The dappling spots where fell the sunshine ! Here it
flowed at last.

And this young life was like it,—here at last.

The hoarse roar
Of the ocean signaled to the dawn. It seemed as if
the sea

Brought white foam-flowers to cast anear this grave.

Light grew apace.

Was it the dim young day, or was it tears, that made
the stars
Pale so, and fade away? Were they the watch-fires of
the dead?
The camp-fires of the living glowed less bright. The
men-of-war's
Long needles busily stitched on; the shroud was
nearly done.

And as night waned and passed, they laid the boy
within his grave,
And filled it to its shallow brim, nor set a headstone
there;
For round that bed Dame Nature tucks her coverlet of
grass
As closely, and as kindly, as a mother's hand would
draw
The coverlet upon the bed she loving makes. We sleep
Too sound to question if the couch be cold. We
sleep to rise
On some immortal morning, when shall come to pass
these words,—
“O death, where is thy sting? Where is thy victory,
O grave?”

LEE'S PAROLE.

“WELL, General Grant, have you heard the news?
How the orders are issued and ready to send
For Lee, and the men in his staff-command,
To be under arrest,—now the war's at an end?”

"How so? Arrested for what?" he cried.
"Oh, for trial as traitors, to be shot, or hung."
The chief's eye flashed with a sudden ire,
And his face grew crimson as up he sprung.
"Orderly, fetch me my horse!" he said.
Then into the saddle and up the street,
As if the battle were raging ahead,
Went the crash of the old war-charger's feet.

"What is this I am told about Lee's arrest,—
Is it true?"—and the keen eyes searched his soul.
"It *is* true, and the order will be enforced!"
"My word was given in their parole
At Richmond, and that parole
Has not been broken,—nor has my word,
Nor *will be* until there is better cause
For breaking than this I have lately heard."

"Do you know, sir, whom you have thus addressed?
I am the War Department's head——"
"And I—am General Grant!
At your peril order arrests!" he said.
* * * * * * *
A friend is a friend, as we reckon worth,
Who will throw the gauntlet in friendship's fight;
But a man is a man in peace or war
Who will stake his all for an enemy's right.
'Twas a hard-fought battle, but quickly won,—
As a fight must be when 'tis soul to soul,—
And 'twas years ago; but that honored word
Preserved the North in the South's parole.

LOVE'S TRANSIT.

WHAT lifetime hath not seen the sign
Of waning stars, and waning moons,
And lives that waned to swift decline?
The stars on orbits fixed passed on,
The moon shone other lands upon,
Each under laws that know no change
Passed on beyond our vision's range,
And each, along its unseen track,
In silent after-time came back.

Their lights in other heavens burned.
But lives? I know not whence they went;
They passed and nevermore returned.
Yet waning life, and star, and moon,
Whose transits never come too soon,
And by the laws of fixed fate
Though not too soon are not too late,—
All these are not so sad as when
Love wanes to rise no more again.

Who has not somewhere seen the sign
Of friendship when it fades away,
Or love that wanes to its decline?
On no fixed orbit moveth love;
No unseen pathway binds the dove,
But north, or south, or east, or west,
She turneth evermore her breast,
And wheresoe'er she wills, she goes,
Untouched by laws which bind the rose.

For roses on their stalks must grow,
While doves may circle where they will,
And stars with years may come and go.
But when love wanes into its night.
It hath no dawn to mortal sight,
And friendship, fading day by day,
Takes final flight and flits away.
Oh, look for worlds to come again,
But never dead regard to men !

POOR OLD WINTER LIKE A BEGGAR.

Poor old winter like a beggar, tattered-robed and grimy-faced,
By the wanton winds of April hath from field and hill
been chased.
Time was when his face was welcome, fresh and buoyant with its grace ;
Now the drifts like hoary wrinkles show of beauty not a trace.

Reluctantly from door to door he hath withdrawn, loth to believe—
As human wight hath been before—that old-time friends learn to deceive.
And loitering on the damp north side of buildings casting shadows cool,
He slowly weeps away his life in many a brown and jagged pool.

Old fellow, hast thou learned as yet that Youth is
welcome, Age is not?
That kindly words and goodly deeds but need full
time to be forgot?
Then wrap thy garment round thee, friend, and sink
into the waiting earth:
Thy death shall shortly be forgot, as Death hath always
been in Birth.

DAWN.

ALL hail, thou sun, thou amber God, thou king !
Sitting upon a throne of fire that men
Do never dare aspire to : men nor gods.
Thy coming up and going down a thing
To always marvel at. Thy glories spread
Abroad, thy court the worlds, thy subjects worlds,
And stars, and all the heavenly planets. All
Lighting their lamps of fire from thy great flame.
It is thy borrowed light which makes the stars
To shine to-day within that far-off night
Whose jewelled bosom presses other lands.
Thou passeth now to carry day beyond.

Was ever dawn which came without its strange
Rare miracle of swift awakening life ?
That glad, spontaneous opening of all eyes ;
The rustling of the trees before the dawn,

Whisp'ring from their high places how they see
The first faint streaks grow in the east,
And come from gray through every pink to crimson,
Deep as ruby flame, and full of fire and gold
And rarest violet, which melts in hues
Of royal purple. Then among the limbs
A sleepy little bird begins to sing,
To wake himself and stir his fellow-kind.
And cocks do crow, and all of bird-kind shakes
The night from out their feathers, and the day
Begins. And little flowers arouse and stir,
And spread their wondrous tents, and straight the dew
Imprisons all the morning in each cup,
And each with each do vie to see which gem
Shall nearly sparkle out his neighbor's eyes.
And cattle low, and stand beside the bars,
Impatient for the milkmaid's hand to draw
From their full udders all the pearly tide,
Then turn them out to crop the buttercups
And dew-damp clover, and the lush, sweet grass
Until the sun goes down.

There grows the same
Old wonder every day, how all these things,—
So many things,—can swiftly put aside
Their heavy sleep and wake to see the dark
Slip down from off the world, and roll along
To cover other lands, and carry sleep,—
Sleep, in a cloud of dusk,—that shadow deep
Of this great world, cast from yon mighty sun !

O R I O N.

WHEN worlds were not, and Time was not, eternities ago,
When no man lived to mark thy light, or watch thee flash and glow,
There, in the birthplace of the spheres, serene, majestic, bright,
O winter star, thou watched the worlds pass evermore from sight !
Slow swinging Saturn pays thee court each thirty years,—a day
Perhaps, in heavenly life, where stars their homage pay.
Alas ! how small, how brief, how vain, our little lives appear,
When God's fixed stars unchanged and bright, count ages but a year !

THE CLOCK OF THE RAIN.

Tick, tick, tick, the clock of the rain outside,
Telling the time of the night in the dark
To the roots that hear, and the buds that hark,
As the slow old hands of the year come round,
And the warm rain drips with a welcome sound.

Tick, tick, tick, like a clock on the shelf of Time,—
Counting the days of my life in the dark,
The warm, red rain of my heart-beats mark
How the years go by, and the hand of Fate
Will point to the last hour soon or late.

Tick, tick, tick, the law of an endless change ;
But the flower that perished last year unseen,
To-day springs out of its old grave, green.
Are the dead forgot, as the dead forget ?
Ah, the light goes on with the sun that's set.

R E C O M P E N S E.

THERE is no day but has its share of light,
And somewhere in the dark there shines a star at night.
There is no cloud, however black and grim,
That does not touch the sunlight with its outmost rim.

There is no sorrow borne without its gain,
No perfect joy that was not ushered in with pain.
There is no woe that can outlast the years,
No smile so sweet in life as that which follows tears.

We learn to do without our own because
There is some recompense in all of Nature's laws ;
No sun can rise until the sun has set ;
No life be lived that has not somewhere known regret.

This thought, my friend, take with thee for the days ;—

God were not God if man could fathom all His ways ;
And as thy day goes down its western slope,
Know, next to Faith, His greatest gift to thee is Hope.

A PARABLE.

A REED by the river, a bird in the brake,
A flower in its tent of the grasses ;
A wild rose abloom for the sweet summer's sake,
A dream,—ah, how soon a dream passes !

A reed that is dead by the river, a bird
Flown away from the braken forever ;
A flower whose gray ashes no new life has stirred,
A dream to be dreamed again never.

THE IRON BRIGADE.

UNITS of an iron column,
Through your recollections solemn
Rolleth battle's mighty volume
In a wave of yore.
We thy yesterdays are keeping,
With an undertone of weeping
For thy greater army sleeping
To return no more.

War hath thinned thy ranks—and years,
But, springing from a people's tears,
All a nation's pride uprears

In a memory-stone.

For a noble cause you fought,—
To the bonded, freedom brought ;
Such deeds never go for naught,—

They survive alone.

Patched with graves thy ranks to-day ;
Wrapped in blue or wrapped in gray,
Dust of man with Nature's clay

Peacefully are sleeping.

But the living proudly tell
How our heroes grandly fell ;
They who fought as brave and well,
Time's reward are reaping.

March our armies side by side
In division long and wide,
They who lived and they who died

March again together.

One with tread of human feet
With our human eyes we greet,—
Smiling, hold out hands to meet

In September weather.

One with banners furled and low
Marcheth silent, marcheth slow
Its battalions to and fro,

Past our human meeting.

Stately sweep its rank and file
Past earth's weary march and mile ;
We who loved them cannot smile,—
Tears, for them, our greeting.

How the foeman learned to fear them ;
How War's favor hovered near them ;
How our living hearts endear them
For the struggle made.
Yet, we of Youth's generation,
Though we live to serve our nation,
Have scant time to give laudation
To our Iron Brigade.

For, the Great Encampment nearing,
Our Grand Army passeth cheering ;
We too, passing, pause, uprearing
Stones to mark their day.
Years grow old, and gray, and hoary ;
Time reaps men, but not their glory ;
Ages but preserve their story,—
Deeds shall live alway!

THREE WORDS.

THREE words,—how much three words will hold !
“I love you !” what a world of magic !
“I hate you !” there's another world,
With all bright fancies turned to tragic.

Then,—“ He is dead !” what chapters end
When those three words are softly spoken !
Love, Hate, and Death. What power is there !
How many hearts the three have broken !

PUSSY-WILLOW.

I'm a little pussy-willow,
And I come out in the spring,
Like a puffy kind of pillow,
Never good for anything.

I'm a funny sort of fellow,
As you'll see if you will look ;
Dressed in green, and gray, and yellow,
Always standing by a brook.

Some folks took me for a kitty,
And they named me Pussy Will,
Which I always thought a pity,
For I *could* be nicknamed Bill.

If you ever care to find me,
You will see I'm prompt to date,
For I have a switch behind me !—
So I never come out late.

THE POT OF GOLD.

THE east was black with the storm, as the sun
Came out of the day's decline
To span the north and the south as one
With the curve of an airy line.
I thought of the story so often told,
Where the rainbows touch the hill
There is always lying a pot of gold
That any may seek who will.

'Twas there at the roots of the great oak-tree
That guarded the valley's rim,
Where the foot of the archway seemed to be,
With its glories growing dim.
And we children thought,—as children will,—
If the rainbow would only stay,
We would cross the valley and climb the hill,
And carry the treasure away.

But as we ran through the high wet grass,
Leaving our dolls and play,
Ever and ever it came to pass
The glory had faded away.
And now when I see the marvellous bow,
With its foot upon hill or plain,
I smile as I think how I came to know
We should search for its gold in vain.

And yet how often it seems in life
Like that old-time story told !
We seek forever with heat and strife
For a mythical pot of gold.
For somewhere, hid in a secret place,
That our fancy seems to see,
As fame, or fortune, or love shows trace,
The treasure is sure to be.

We cross the valley, and climb the hill,
And seek it from day to day,
To find the prize we covet is still
Farther and farther away.
We all go on, as go we must,—
Ah, the story is often told !
For we find at the end but a bit of dust,
And never a pot of gold.

AS DAYS GO DOWN THE WEST.

As days go down the west, and tender stars
All rimmed about with Heaven's blue come forth,
And set their light-ships in the trackless seas
Whose highways stretch away from south to north,
I think how days have risen in the east,
And flashed like meteors from hill to hill,
Set full of sunny hours till evening came
To close them like rose-petals, soft and still.

And that my work but poorly has been done,
And that my day in idleness hath set ;
With saddened eyes I look into the west
And watch it pass away with keen regret.
Those precious moments lost in dreaming mood,
Those perfect hours forever past me by !
Small wonder that new stars are blurred with tears,
And old days wafted heavenward with a sigh.

LIE STILL, POOR PAST.

LIE still, poor past ! They have counted you dead,
As dead as the flowers that you cherished,
Whose color and perfume of roses has fled
With the days of a summer which perished.

Lie still, poor love ! Oh, awake not to weep
That you and your dream are both lying
Where only a headstone the record doth keep
From the dead to the ones who are dying.

Lie still, poor ghost ! Oh, arise not and pass
From the house where your heartache is hidden,
Where all of life's sorrows crept under the grass,
And none may arouse them unbidden.

Lie still, poor dream ! For you is the best
Of the world its pleasures forsaking,
To lie with hearts broken, to claim of their rest
Just enough for the hearts that are breaking.

Sleep on, dead past ! For the sake of the years
That are gone may you never awaken,
To learn the sad creed in the scripture of tears,
That waits on a memory forsaken.

IN COMMENDAM.

I WATCH the yellow rain of leaves drifting down the fall :

The birds of summer from the limbs complainingly do call.

The year puts off the garment she wore since it was June,

Just as an organ's changeful pipes cast off the old-time tune.

And sad, and sweet, and tender, like thoughts from out the past,

The dripping rain appeals to me ; the summer could not last.

I think of other seasons that slept beneath the snow ;
This one is passing the same way I've seen all summers go.

The golden-rod has perished, and fallen where it stood,

The thistle by the roadway, the flowers of field and wood ;

The sunflower and the fern-brake held fast upon the
year;
Frost brushed their clinging fingers off, as we brush
off a tear.

I wish I could repeat it,—the summer dying now,—
I wish the leaves were green again, and fast upon the
bough.

But now the sharp-voiced cricket and locust shrilly
sing,
Like little needles stitching down the fall upon the
spring.

There will be other summers, and other springs, I
know,
And other blooms rise up as fair as these which are so
low;
But other minds may mark them, and other eyes may
see,
For all the certainties of flowers revealeth naught to
me.

Yet if the hand of Nature revives them through all
springs,
How can I think that Nature's God does less by human
things?
How can I doubt that we shall rise from sleeping 'neath
the sod,
Each from his chrysalis the grave, into the life of God.

THE DEATH OF WOLSEY.

Now to the world that gave me honors return I them again.
It was a gilded cup, but bitter ; thus they gave it me, and I,
That none may say, "Full was the goblet when they gave it him,
But empty he returns it," do testify I never quaffed A draught from it that I could wish mine enemy to drink !
Hatred, envy, came between when I would raise it to my lips,
And lest such bitterness upon my tongue might there remain,
I ever set it down again ; nor knew till now 'twas empty.
The glistening of it, set round with gems, and gilded rare,
Mine eyes made blind. And for that others jostled to obtain
That which I held, and fought for it, and grudged me it, I thought
Its value greater than it was ; but now, I know the world
Sets store by that it hath not,—knowing not its worth.
I brought
No glory with me when I came,—and now I take none hence.

That which the world has given, give I back ; my better part,
My soul, which I did bring, I take ; and none begrudge me it.
One soul will be enough for utmost greed to answer for,
Hence none wish more than one.

Now, good my lord, but give me leave To sleep ; and in that sleep may I forget how prostituted I

My many gifts ; let me not wake unless it be to find Mine earthly pride, vain-glorious, hath been erased From off the book of time, that I come only with my soul

To find my place hereafter. Give my body room In earth, and shrieve my soul before it seeks its Heaven.

DECORATION DAY, 1884.

If into the silence folding all the May about your sleep, Tender thoughts of loved ones holding all their love yet to you creep,—

If the rose's silent message, like a perfume in the dark, Follows through the shrouded passage which our loving hands may mark,—

Wake not thou to take the token that thy country's heart will keep

All thy memories unbroken ; sweeter for it, Soldier, sleep !

When the hurtling bullets scattered through the ranks,
unflinched you stood ;

Man, God's weapon, might be shattered, but God's
cause remained as good.

Now in fair spring's gentle weather far more silent lie
you here :—

Strange, that lead-sown seed should gather into flowers
year after year !

Strange, that they who sowed in clamor should in
silence some day reap

All unmoved by glory's glamour. Better for it, Soldier,
sleep !

Never sweeter were your slumbers in the old-time cradle-
bed ;

Never greater were your numbers since our nation
counts her dead.

Never were your camp-fires brighter than the glow-
worm's little lamp ;

Never were your low tents whiter than these green
ones now in camp.

Never picket guard unbroken as this silence, guardful,
deep,

Where the only watch-word spoken whispers softly,—
“Soldier, sleep !”

Lay the roses of the summer by each green door one
by one ;

Fate hath not a newer comer who such glorious deeds
hath done.

Time hath not in all his castle, builded stone by stone
of years,
Men more grand than freed the vassal,—men more
worthy honest tears !
Peace be in each narrow dwelling, rest above thy
slumbers keep !
Loving hearts through flowers are telling how they loved
thee. Soldier, sleep !

When all armies shall have followed where our army
dead hath past,
When such deeds in life are hallowed by truth's long,
bright rays at last,
When the final shadow creeping brings life's evening
dusk and damp,
May it find us sweetly sleeping as our heroes here in
camp.
Wake them not to take the token that their country's
heart will keep
Noble memories unbroken ! Sweeter for them, Soldier,
sleep !

THAT BABY.

ONE little row of ten little toes,
To go along with a brand-new nose ;
Eight new fingers and two new thumbs
That are just as good as sugar-plums,—
That's baby.

One little pair of new round eyes
Like a little owl's, so big and wise ;
One little place they call a mouth,
Without one tooth from north to south,—
That's baby.

Two little cheeks to kiss all day,
Two little hands so in his way ;
A brand-new head, not very big,
That seems to need a brand-new wig,—
That's baby.

Dear little row of ten little toes !
How much we love them nobody knows ;
Ten little kisses on mouth and chin,
(What a shame he wasn't born a twin !)
That baby.

NIGHT IN THE ROCKIES.

'NEATH the horizon's dripping eaves
Half-halting stood the passing day,—
The wind swept through the valley-door
With gusty puff and muffled roar,
And down the echoing mountain-side
Small water-courses grew more wide,
Fed thus by Heaven's great flood-tide.

Above the misty mountain-top,
Whose outlines wavered in the rain,—
As one who turns a longing face
Towards some familiar flitting-place,—
From out her cowl of clouds the day
For one brief moment, wan and gray,
Looked back before she passed away.

The canyon, lying black and deep,—
As if the gods had held the plough
That turned this furrow in the world
Through which the swollen river swirled,—
The trees, interpreting the speech
Of some storm-god through pine and beech,
All held their secrets out of reach.

Upon the rafters of the stars
The storm had nailed its shingles gray.
The shadowed rush of time and stream
Swept on about me like a dream ;
From light to darkness,—must we go
Into our sure hereafter so ?
My soul arose and yearned to know.

LIFE.

LIFE is but a repetition of events
Which have been since the world begun. Nature
Repeats her summers yearly ;—the same flowers,
The same trees, the same months of spring and fall,

The same storm and sun, the same light and shadow,
The same snow and winter.

Then how should lives
Recurring, differ much from vanished lives ?
Man hath not changed his shape : his hopes and fears
Are still the same,—his joys and sorrows ;—hearts
Still beat, their tiny hammers driving nails
Of seconds in the buildings of our years.
The same old loves, which made or marred all lives
Before us, still exist, although the hearts
Which throbbed with passion once, are still to-day :
They pass from man to man, a heritage,
To make or mar the generations coming.

The same old crimes and virtues, woes and deaths,
Still hurt, and help, and vex, and kill this man.
They make the world a place of graves, with room
For many more ; and while each one is new,
It yet is old. 'Tis the same patterned bed
Which man hath spaded out for man, for years ;
The same shape fills it now which filled it then ;
The same grass grows above, the same sands shine,
The same birds sing ; and man lives, loves, and dies.

T H E W H I P P O O R W I L L .

O voice that wanders through the world,
Detached from mortal ken and sight,
Invisible, yet wondrous sweet,
Thy single sentence as complete
As any star set in thy night,

Why should a stranger “ whip poor will ” ?
And what has William done ?—poor Will !

O sound to fringe a gathering dusk,
When other songsters cease to sing,
 Why not whip George, or John, or James ?
There are a thousand other names
Would sound as well as Will’s,—poor thing !
He must be nearly dead with fright
To hear you scold so every night.

You are a voice, a word, a song,—
Not bird. Perhaps some vengeful dame
 Recalls in other worlds than this
 How Will hath dared to steal a kiss,
And nightly now rails at his name.
'Tis well for Will you don’t incite
Us *all* to whip him every night.

Yet, *if* Will kissed you,—what’s the harm ?
You should not cherish such a spite,
 And still insist with pouting lip
 That Will alone should feel the whip,—
'Tis neither just nor right.
Were you as sweet as is your voice,
To kiss or not—Will had no choice !

There must be something back of this,—
Ay, now I have it ! When you hurl
Your tirade at him for one kiss—
Will must have kissed the other girl !

OLD THOUGHTS.

How shall we make the old thought new?

In what new guise can it be dressed
To make that seem both fresh and true
Which has been oft and well expressed?

Perhaps, in our new phase of life,
Which each must newly live and learn,
The truths oft told by other lips
To us with fresher meanings burn.

Perhaps, to understandings young,
With past or coming age untried,
The old thought, like another tongue,
Another language-door throws wide.

Perhaps it lies—that subtle power
Which gives new birth to old ideas—
More in the reader's gift to see
Than in the poet's power to please.

A REPLY.

No thought is new. All hath been told
Of mortal life, or love, or plan;
Yet doth the poet oft make bold
To add new touches if he can.

To halter fact, to bridle time,—
 The Old and New,—a tandem team,
 A span to smash thy dearest rhyme,
 And tip thee roughly from thy dream.

Yet, rise, O poet, from the dust,
 Brush off thy doublet, don thy hat,
 And be assured all great bards must
 Somewhere, some time, be likewise *flat*.

PHILOSOPHY.

O PHILOSOPHY ! thou venom'd serpent,
 Flourishing in the jungles of our brains,
 And hissing at the fair, clear fields because
Thou dost not love them—when shalt thou be slain ?
 Alas ! so long as God gives mind to man,
 So long will man contrive to make it clear
 God is not God, nor is at all ! So long
 Will he yet speculate on ways divine,
 And think himself would be a better God,
 And make a better world. And just so long
 The hinges of Immortal Truth shall creak
 With rust of imperception in man's mind ;
 And, blurred with darkness of his own conceit,
 He balances God's Providence and laws
 Beside his own desires ; if they conflict,
 God's Providence is all gone wrong,—not he.

A CHILD'S LETTERS.

AH, little letters ! how you make
The still past voiceful ! Yet each line
Bids the old sorrow throb and ache
Through all this memory of mine.

These crooked characters a child
Traced on the paper years ago.
The pencil often pointed wild,—
The letters lean and straggle so.

They crowd each other off the line,
And topple over at the ends,
And through them all I see no sign
That “ dots ” and “ I’s ” were ever friends.

No comma dares to dictate here,
No period calls a sudden pause ;
Ah, plainly he’d no cause to fear
When violating grammar’s laws !

Each line runs cheerfully up-hill,
Although they straggle as they go,
And words are chopped into at will,—
Not because rhetoric coined them so.

How boldly syllables are made
To drop apart, and who shall care
If some small letters look afraid,
Elbowed by giants here and there ?

Ah, little letters ! that small hand
Which traced you carefully and slow,
Has learned an art none understand,
Through all the sciences men know.

And whiter than this precious page
It lies beneath the passing years,
Unlined by Care, unseamed by Age,
Unused to drying Sorrow's tears.

He was not mine, yet love makes kin ;
His gain will always be my loss ;
And no one knows the depth within
The heart which has not borne a cross.

How bravely he has signed his name,
In three high letters, straight and tall !
Ah, they are written with a flame,
And not by this poor pencil scrawl !

That sun went down before its noon ;
And these tall letters, straight and high,—
Alas, they reached to Heaven too soon !
My little lad, my angel Guy.

TIME.

TIME is a chimney-sweep, who sweeps the soot
Where once the fire has been ; and he prepares
The chimneys of the years for coming days,
And other fires, which may rekindle flame
Within the places where our lives were lights
Which vanished, and whose ashes but remain.

THE POSTMAN.

I HEAR the postman's whistle gay,—
A lucky dog is he !
In every house, in every block,
What willing hands undo the lock !
However dark the day may be,
What smiles it is *his* fate to see !

What other male-man is received
With half so many smiles ?
Why, I'm in luck if I do know
One girl who runs to meet me so !
Say what you will, no man beguiles
So many hearts with *honest* wiles.

There's magic in that leathern bag !
Pandora's box—forsooth !
That old gray suit, that pouch-like sack
Strapped crookedly across his back,—

These outward tokens show no charms
To coax maids to his outstretched arms.

Ah, he's a rogue beyond a doubt,—
Some Mephisto disguised !
And though he try he can't conceal
The interest in him maidens feel.
Some fatal fascination lies
Within that wily rascal's eyes !

And would 'twere maids alone—alack !
The matrons too succumb.
That old Pied Piper's magic fife
Ne'er lured away an honest wife !
Ah, I believe *his* art lies in
These modern whistles made of tin !

For every day the matrons run,—
A preconcerted signal 'tis !
Why, I have seen my better half
At my remonstrance—gayly laugh !
That lad who whistled for a kiss
Held not an office like to this.

I hear his whistle,—there she goes—
The whistle—and my wife !
If I should break that fellow's head
Some man would take his place instead ;
Would take his place, and bag, and whistle,
So I should only waste my missile.

I have no recourse in the law,
Unless he steals my mail ;
His wholesale thefts of *females* stand
With no redress throughout the land.
'Tis plain there's but one thing to do,—
By Jove,—I'll be a postman too !

SOME DAY.

YOUR kisses have not power to move the silent tene-
ment of clay
In which the heart has ceased to beat,—the soul has
gone away.
And all so quiet now I lie, as one entranced in sweetest
sleep,
One seeing me would never guess the silent slumber
was so deep :
So deep that never life nor light shall mirror in these
sightless eyes,
Whose heavy lids will not be raised on any morrow
'neath the skies.

And weeping friends will praise me now, and loving
words of me be said ;
They will recall the dear old past more tenderly—that
I am dead ;
And pity me, perhaps, because I go a lonesome journey
when
I am forevermore beyond the sight, and sound, and
love of men.

A lonesome journey, where the ear shall vainly strain
itself to hark
If other passing oars shall stir those midnight waters
in the dark.

And those who othertimes were cold will praise the
contour of my face,
And say death has not taken quite some old-time look,
or curve, or grace,—
And others praise my eyes, or hair, or cut with tender
hands a tress,
To put away with tears; sometimes to take out sadly
and caress.

And some will raise my heavy hand to see it whitely
through their tears,—
A clasp, a touch, a shape, that shall no more be felt in
coming years.
Perchance to drop the listless weight not wont to be so
stiff and cold,
And shuddering turn away to think how soon the slim
white thing will mould.

But when the summer comes again and this drear
season passes by,
A few will sometimes come to see the quiet house in
which I lie,
And some, remembering flowers I loved, will put a few
on my low bed,
Sighing to think they too must fade, and soon be only
dead on dead.

ILO.

WHEN the blossoms of the summer had begun to bloom
in May,
And the sunbeams all were vying which should make
the brightest day,
Like the blossoms and the sunbeams and the best that
earth can give,
From her home among the Angels came our Ilo here
to live.

All the birds began to build ; all the leaves began to
grow ;
Twas the gayest, gladdest May-time of the many Mays
we know.
And the sun shone warm and golden, and the stars
came out so bright,
That the roses in the garden hardly knew when it was
night.

Years go by, and more are coming, but that May-time
of the past
Makes them all so glad and happy, each is better than
the last.
And when all the birds are building, and when all the
blossoms grow,
Then we keep our Ilo's birthday, proud that Nature
loves her so.

Time, take heed you do not harm her ! Sorrow, keep
from her away !
Year by year go by in summers, till the gold has turned
to gray ;
And when full of years and blessings, all good deeds
framed in her days,
Take her back among the Angels, crowned with Virtue's
fadeless Mays.

THE DEAD PRIEST.

THE day was dim with the falling rain,
And shadowed under the ghostly clouds ;
The gusty wind had a tone of pain,
And the white-capped brethren ran in crowds.

And across the way, through the blinding sleet,
I saw the signal of death in sight ;
For within, with the tapers at head and feet,
Lay the good young priest who died last night.

The storm beat hard on its muffled drum,
And the sky like a mourner sadly wept,
And all day long I was watching them come
To visit the house where the young priest slept.

In and out went the solemn train
Where the ghostly reaper had strode to reap ;
Out and in, and out again,
But he never awoke, for his sleep was deep.

And my soul arose with the scent of flowers,—
 Of funeral flowers where the dead had lain,
 And soared with the might of immortal powers
 Above the region of cloud and rain.

For the priest who lay in his burial-gown,
 With the blazing tapers at head and feet,
 Was only a man who was putting down
 A cup of gall for eternal sweet.

But the day was sad, and the tearful rain
 Swept misty figures from out the clouds,
 And the gusty winds were shrill with pain,
 And the white-capped brethren ran in crowds.

Then Night, like a black-stoled sister, crept
 After the day in her cowl of sleet.
 But the good young priest in his silence slept,
 With the tapers burning at head and feet.

S U N - D O G S .

THE sun like a huntsman comes forth with his dogs ;
 Perhaps 'tis the bears in the sky that he seeks,
 But up in that forest of stars where they roam
 No trail in the snow of the hunted game speaks.

The frost like the lash of a whip snaps and cuts
 Whenever this huntsman goes seeking his game.
 The wind like a wolf sets his tooth to the flesh
 Which dares to come forth in dispute of his claim.

The frost shows no footprints, the spheres give no sign,
Unless the sign-lore of the heavens be plain
To a huntsman so bold, that he reads at a glance
Where the bears on their journey last night may
have lain.

We will look for the Ursas to-night in the sky,—
Poor Major and Minor! *If* they are still plain,
We shall know this bold huntsman was foiled on the
trail,
And with his two dogs has gone hunting in vain.

THERE IS A TIME.

THERE is a time when wood and wold, its beauties to
the year hath sold,
And turned its summer into gold.
There is a time when gold doth fade, when Autumn's
tomb is swiftly made
By Winter's cold and icy spade.
There is a time when Summer's dead shall lie beneath
the bounding tread
Of Springs whose day is not yet fled ;—
If perished seasons reck or ken, what doth it profit
Summer then
That she has been beloved of men?

There is a time when hearts must keep the pathos of
their woe asleep,
Lest some one hear them when they weep.

There is a time when Life is bid to keep its secrets
barred and hid

Beneath some fast-sealed coffin-lid.

There is a time when coming years shall find our grave
of hopes and fears

Unwet by any memory-tears.

There is a time when all we win throughout life's battles'
weary din

Seems but the wages of our sin.

There is a time when we have won the thing we prized ;
our day is done,

And but remains its setting sun ;

But, by its light when life is old, when all its best
young dreams are sold,

We sleep while others count our gold.

We sell the summer of our youth, we sell its tender
heart and truth,

For one small measure of life's ruth.

We see its Faith, its Love, its Trust, fade slow away
with moth and rust,—

We gain our little share of dust.

We rush into the maddening crowd, we raise our
clamorous voices loud,—

To bid upon our own poor shroud.

What is our profit on that day when we go out of life
to stay ?—

We cannot take its wealth away.

When we have given of our best, have bartered all that
made us blest,

Have we secured a sweeter rest ?
 Oh, heed the lesson of the wold whose shroud is always
 made of gold !—
 Thus are life's summers often sold.

But in that time when other hands, not yet escaped
 their swaddling-bands,
 Shall hold the sceptres of all lands,
 And in that time when all our worth of purse, or spirit,
 on the earth,
 Shall be forgot in new lives' birth,—
 Ah, in *that* time what we have sought, or what our
 lives' small ends have brought,
 Shall at Oblivion's door be naught.

EDITH.

TO LAURA.

JUST a summons to a kingdom
 Where no guest may come unbidden ;
 Just a message framed in silence,
 As a singer's voice is hidden.
 Only passed into the gladness,
 As a lily bursts its bud ;
 Only changed to joy from sadness,
 Like a tide from ebb to flood.

Time goes hand in hand with sorrow ;
 Crossed and chequered are his ways ;
 But who knows what blest to-morrows
 Spring from bitter yesterdays ?

From dead years new years are springing,
From dead flowers rare perfumes rise.
Can we mourn our freed ones singing
With the hosts in Paradise ?

All the fairest things must perish,
Stones alone may bide with Time ;
Flowers were made to pluck and cherish,
Rocks, for hurrying feet to climb.
All the agony of parting,
If we could but make it so,
Is the earthly rootlet starting,
So the Heavenly branch may grow.

THE GHOST IN THE BOTTLE.

I WISH I could tell what a beautiful smell
Crept out of the bottle that stood on the shelf ;
But you may have smelled just as good things yourself.
The words on the label had just caught my eye,
When just then I fancied I heard a wee sigh.
The name, I must tell you, was printed "White Rose,"
And now a most wonderful tale I'll disclose.
You never would think—and neither would I—
But that I was telling a fib on the sly ;
But really, and truly, I heard a faint sigh,—
The least little, weest bit of a sound
That ever came out of a bottle so round.

"Oh, dear ! I'm so pinched !" said the least little voice ;
"But what can one do if one has not a choice ?

I'm crowded as can be, shut up here in this bottle,
And pretty near choked by that stuffy old stopple !
I never can catch the least breath of the air !
And they keep me as close, and with just as much care,
As if I had done something terribly bad.
Oh, dear ! I suppose it's no use getting mad ;
But when I was out in the garden and grew
In the sun and all of the beautiful dew,
I couldn't complain about not having air,
Because I had plenty, and something to spare ;
For rather high winds were somewhat destroying,
And then, to be sure, the bugs were annoying,—
But I wasn't pinched up quite as tight as a brick.
Oh, dear ! it's so close here it just makes me sick !
I wish that some good soul would open the door,
They'd think that they'd never smelled roses before !”

The poor little ghost was so feeble and sad,
And I felt so unhappy to see her feel bad,
That I opened the cover at once, and then—well,
I wish I could tell what a beautiful smell
Crept out of the bottle that stood on the shelf ;
But you may have smelled White Roses yourself.

ALL THAT IS, HATH BEEN.

No tale that's told can ever be made new !
For Love is old, and Death is old, and Life
More old than all. The same strong passions surge
Across our days. Thought hath strode on, but still
The old thought lives.

The blind bat, seeking shade,
Against the bar of sunshine smites his wings ;
Night is so dear to him he hates the day.
The raven, like a mourner, flits above
The shining fields, and hangs his sable garb
Against the yellow of the ripening grain.
For bird or man there is some outward guise,
Which serves to demonstrate how things in life
Must don an order which shall somehow suit
An inner shading, a true life. Not all
Are plain to us upon the surface ; *all*
Are plain to One.

And this is true, not new.

All that is, hath been. All that is, will be.

THE SPECTRE HORSEMAN.

PHANTOM steed and phantom horseman,

Through the night they galloped fast ;—

Ghost of that long-perished Norseman,

Borne upon the midnight blast.

And his eyes were dark and gloomy,

And his face it had a tomby

Look, as one has long since buried.

And his laugh was weird and eerie,

And no ring was in it cheerie.

'Twas a light and ghostly laughter,

And the hearer heard it after,—

Wailing down the dark around him,

Like when first its shrilling found him,—

With its wave of solemn sorrow,
Wailing down a late to-morrow.

Midnight time, and midnight people,
Throng the hours when humans sleep ;
And the moon behind the steeple
Shows the bells in slumber deep.
I have seen the moonlight shining
Crost their massy sides and lining
With its light the steeple's shadow.
I, myself, have seen them tolling,
But no sound was from them rolling.
Unseen hands those bells were ringing ;
Unheard knells were from them springing ;
And strange shapes were flitting whitely
Through those shadows grim and nightly.
And that strange and mystic horseman—
Ghost of that unhappy Norseman—
Galloped hard and galloped fast
Through the shrieking midnight blast.
Left behind that ghastly laughter,
Trailing down the darkness after
Horse and rider so unearthly.

From the church at Scarborg Fridden,
Standing in the gloomy hollow,
Yearly hath this horseman ridden,
Yearly must his laughter follow.
There, the day he should have married,
Was a pallid maiden carried
In her bridal robes arrayed.

There he knelt beside her, seeming
But to watch the taper's gleaming
In her shining, golden hair ;
Seemed to watch the gleaming only
Of the flickering glimmer lonely
 In the maiden's golden tresses ;
 Yet he gave her no caresses ;
 Looked upon her, fearing, fearful,—
 Yet not loving, yet not tearful ;
Watched the taper flicker lonely
In her gleaming tresses only.

On her breast the church's token
 Virgins only wear was lying.
Claspt the kirtle, still unbroken,—
 Maid, not wife, was she in dying.
 And he gazed upon her coldly,
 And his face looked seamed and oldly
In the taper's spectral glare.
Hark ! Upon his senses rolling
Came the bell's deep midnight tolling.
Up he started, maddened, frenzied,—
All the silent stupor ended,—
By this death and darkness crazed ;
In the shadows round him gazed,—
Peered into the shadows round him,
Mad, to think those knells had found him.
 Burst into a madman's laughter,—
 From each echoing nook and rafter
 Spectral laughter came to jeer him,
 And the bells they jangled,—“ Hear him !”

From the church at Scarborg Fridden,
Standing in the ghostly hollow,
Yearly hath this horseman ridden,
Yearly must his laughter follow.
For he rushed into the gloomy
Midnight, where the grave-lights tomby
Flickered 'midst the sombre willows.
Sprang upon his steed and fled he,
From that spectral church then sped he.
O'er the hills and through the fallows,
Through the river's winding shallows,—
Past the lush field's dewy gloom,
Wayside cross, and swamp, and tomb ;
Through the copse and through the heather,
Borne he knew not, cared not whither.
And no more returned he, riding
Where the woodsy witches hiding,
Could repeat that ghastly laughter,
Still forever trailing after ;
Could return that shrilling laughter,
Moaning, wailing, fading after.
But from church at Scarborg Fridden,
Standing haunted in the hollow,
Yearly hath this horseman ridden,
Yearly must his laughter follow.

I F.

If I were a tiny blade of grass,
And could sit in the sun and grow.
The scythe in the mower's hand would pass,
And I should be laid in the shining row ;
Would I better my lot to change? No, no!

If I were a silken leaf to grow
In the summer sun and the warm, soft rain,
There would come a time of cold and snow ;
My spring would never return again.
Would I better my lot to change? No, no!

If I were a little bird that sings
Where the reeds and meadow-lilies show,
The cunning fowler might clip my wings ;
I could not sing from my lilies so.
Would I better my lot to change? No, no!

If I had a little more to hope,
And hope failed then, I should have more woe.
It is better the garden's blooms should ope
Just one by one. Would you have them blow
Into perfect flowers in a night? No, no!

I am glad it is as it is to-day,
For *what is* is best, if we could but know
The wisdom which answers some prayers, "Nay, nay,"
As the years may come so let them go!
Is our way better than God's? No, no!

THE BEARS IN THE SKY.

OH, come, little sailors, your ships are aground,—
Such queer working seamen I never have found !
Your cargo and crew just stand still on the land,
While the sea is so thin I see through to the sand.
And look you,—the daylight is flying up high,
And sure as you live there are Bears in the sky !

There's old Ursa Major to tramp through the pines
Where the stars are the trees,—how *such* a wood
shines !
How jolly 'twould be to sly up in plain sight
Of the man in the moon getting fagots at night !
But then Ursa Minor, old Ursa's young cub,
Has a tooth for small sailors ; ah, “there is the rub !”

What sport it would be to go hunting some day
Through all those bright woods by the great milky-
way !

Just think of a river of sweet milk and cream,
With two golden Dippers to dip in the stream !
For the Great Dipper hangs just up over that tree,—
Dear, dear, what a place for a drink *that* would be !

Now would you believe that the Dipper's a Bear,
Or The Bear is the Dipper which hangs over there ?
It sounds like a fairy-tale, don't it, my dear ?
But it's surely and truly the truth I tell here.

I'm afraid such a dipper would never dip cream,—
But you'll find many things which are not what they
seem.

What a land, what a land, were it not for the bears,
Whom no one has hunted, for nobody dares !
And then the Great Fish which you never could get
If you try with a hook, or you spread him a net ;
But if with the dipper he *could* be dipped out,
You'd catch him, I warrant, right fast beyond doubt.

Then come, little sailors, the moon is a lake,
And while it is placid a sail we will take
To the land of Nid-nod in the craft we call Dreams ;
We shall see all the country, its lands and its streams,
And when from that cruising we come by and by,
We shall know more about the Two Bears in the sky.

A LOVER'S VOW.

A LOVER'S vow. Faith, 'tis not much !
A little breath, a little passion ;
New touches on a costume worn
Since men and women were in fashion.

A lover's words. Fixed as the hills—
Sometimes! Again light as a feather ;
A touch of Fate's ungentle breeze
May blow them lightly off together.

Heigh-ho ! who would not have it so ?
A block of stone is fixed and stable,—
A unit in a wall, perhaps,
But of itself to build unable.

Let loves and lovers oft be changed,—
I care not ! Make them like the weather.
Whatever mood will suit me best—
If *thou* and *I* will it together.

THE N.

I ONLY see the stars are set
In golden order in the sky,
As if the sunlight lingered yet
Within each spark and would not die.

I only hear the winds go on
Their unseen courses through the air,
And cold or balmy, still blow on,
Mysterious and everywhere.

I only feel when absent sound
Reveals the silence of the earth,
Whose noiseless motion, round, and round,
Has never faltered since its birth.

I only hope when life is spent,
And Death redeems its dust again,
There was a greater token meant ;
More power goes on than can remain.

I see, and hear, and feel, and hope,
I rest my faith upon its trust ;
The vine climbs ever *up* the slope,
And human longings surely must.

But when the bond of sea and sky
Have in eternal union met,
We shall find out the how, and why,
Of mysteries unravelled yet.

THE LOST STAR.

THEY shone above the distant hills,
Twin stars, twin worlds of other spheres :
We used to watch them in the dark,
And wonder what they were, and mark
How quick they dipped below the rim
Of western hills, so dusk and dim !

Across a purple belt of pines,
Beyond a distance flecked with gloom,
We used to watch their points of light
Come sharply out against the night,
And wondered if, so dim and far,
Our world appeared to theirs a star.

One went away to distant lands,
One stayed to watch the stars alone ;
But when we met in after-years,—
I saw but one shine through my tears,—
Through all the dewy autumn night
One light alone shone clear and bright.

No eye had marked a falling star,
No one had seen it leave its place ;
But o'er the purple belt of pines
One lamp alone and lonely shines,
And past the dusk hills' distant rim
One star alone sets dull and dim.

Perhaps it fell through awful space
To shine within another sphere ;
Perhaps, by some great passion hurled,
Its fall destroyed another world ;
It may—who knows?—shine on to-night
'Midst unseen space, serene and bright.

No other sun can shine the same,
No other love be half so sweet.
The flower that withers ere it blows
Has lost its best reward ;—God knows
Where all lost loves may find their own,
Where no sad shepherd guards alone.

No lost star missed from out its place,
No lost love slipped from out our reach ;
No aching hearts, no falling tears,
Because one lonely star appears,
And past the dusk hills waiting grim,
One star alone sets dull and dim.

T O - M O R R O W S H A L L B E Y E S T E R - D A Y .

To-MORROW shall be yesterday ; to-day
Was yesterday's to-morrow,
Which promised us some flitting joy,
But brought perhaps a sorrow.

Ah, mystery or mystic morrows !
We, blindfolded with to-days,
Shall grope for hidden futures till
All lives are yesterdays.

T H E F U N N Y M A N F R O M F U N N Y - L A N D .

T H E funniest man from Funny-Land,
With funny legs that never stand,
And funny thumbs and funny toes,
And blinking eyes, and turn-up nose,
And speech you never understand ;
Oh, funny man from Funny-Land !

The funniest speech you ever heard !
He talks,—but never says a word ;

And looks as bland as if he knew
More than he tells of "Goo, ah goo;"
As if he thought we'd understand
The funny talk of Funny-Land !

And if we ask him where he's from,
Or what's his native state, or home,
He always says just—"Goo, ah goo!"
I've never heard of it,—have *you*?
It would be fun to find it and
The funny things in Funny-Land.

And when we ask him what's his name,—
"Goo, ah goo,"—'tis just the same;
I think he came from China here,
He talks so very odd and queer;
But what he means I never can
Make up my mind,—that funny man!

Oh, funny man from Funny-Land,
Whom no one here can understand,
I think we'll have to send you to
Your native land of "Goo-ah-Goo;"
For there they all must understand
The funny folks of Funny-Land.

RICHARD WAGNER.

HUSH ! The chord is broken,—ended,
And to silence dies away.
Fades melodiously its glory
In the evening shadow gray ;
And the master's ear is turning,
And the master's soul is yearning
For that harmony immortal,—
For that greater, grander token
Of divinest measure granted—
Where the chord is never broken.

H Y M N.

OH, Thou who lived in Galilee,
My Friend, my Saviour true,
How *much* Thy love has done for me,
How *little* mine for you !

Unworthily I take Thy gifts,
Dumb as a weed that grows,
And while its hands to Heaven it lifts,
No reason for it knows.

Grown fast within my narrow groove,
My selfish leaves expand,
Unfit to be, for all Thy love,
Nursed by that kindly hand.

How good Thou art ! how great to be
Forgiving, patient, kind !
Thou,—all my faults so plain to see !
I,—to Thy grace so blind !

Unfit to perish at Thy will,
Yet more unfit to live,—
Oh, since we need forgiveness still,
How blest Thou *canst* forgive !

IF THE CURTAIN COULD BE LIFTED.

If the curtain could be lifted when our friends are
passing through,
Could its sombre cloud be rifted, showing Heaven to
our view,
Ah, how few would now be weeping at the dark and
narrow door,
Where dear, vanished shapes are sleeping, as all life
has slept before !

In the dark they see us languish,—of their light we
catch no gleam ;
They can see us in our anguish,—of their bliss we
poorly dream ;

They can see us try to banish care, and pain, and
tears, and woe,—

Trials they saw long since vanish when they left us
years ago.

But we miss them, and we fancy they are missing
earth-scenes too,

Heedless of Death's necromancy, which revealed all
to their view;

Things which we as blessings measure with our little
meed of mirth,

They exchanged for greater treasure than is given man
on earth.

Only missing things which perish, summers which
must pass to snow;

Fadeless bloom and flower they cherish where immortal
roses grow.

Our eyes, waking here or sleeping, sad and dim look
through our tears:

Theirs, forever done with weeping, shine beyond the
pain of years.

Could the angels send a message to the waiting ones
below,

Oh, with what a joyful presage would we see our dear
ones go!

See them pass the grassy curtain, going into peace
from strife;

Leaving mystic for the certain; passed from dying
into life.

THE NEW AND OLD.

NEW rhymes, to take the old rhymes' place,
 New books, to relegate the old
To some dark corner's close embrace,
 Where unused pages gather mould.

New pictures offered in the shops,
 New china, silver, silken stuffs,—
The wheel goes round and never stops,
 Although it feels some sharp rebuffs.

New faces, ay, are they not sweet ?
 Age may *yet* wrinkle them, but Time
Is now a captive at Youth's feet,
 And dare not soil them with his grime.

New friends ? Ah, true, they may not fill
 The places sacred to the old,
But he who dares to chide them will
 Be more than I in daring bold.

For all is right ; the seasons come,
 But would we have one always stay ?
A stopped clock, listless, still, and dumb,
 Can hold no office in the day.

What place we have we hold in trust ;
 We took it from some vanished one ;
And when we too return to dust,
 That trust bequeathed must still go on.

He who would cavil at the new,—
New manners, customs, fashions, men,—
Must not forget they're fitted to
That which *now is*, not what *has been*.

As illy could our day be set
Upon the Nile decades ago,
As those lost arts which they forgot
Might in their sleepy lotus blow.

Lost arts to some lost race belong,
And to new art, new time, new strength,
Is given power to make the thong
Which binds us to our day at length.

Which binds us to our day. What power
Can make that day more far, less near,
Or give us other time or hour
Than that which we have now, and here?

And that day's work in ages hence
May speak for us more than we know,
If we can feel life's consequence
Is *not*—to live, but *is*—to grow.

F A L L.

To-DAY, with the rain like a thick curtain fallen
Misty and black betwixt nature and I,
The hills lost somewhere, and always the sullen
Gray face of the storm between me and the sky.
The eye, looking inward, so quickly discovers
The graves in the hearts of the decently dead,—
But ah ! that *one* grave with its pitiful shadow,
Neglect for its footstone, Regret for its head !

The elm, like a witch, at the foot of the garden,
Is tossing its scrawny bare arms at the sky ;
A few lonely flowers, looking tearful, have taught us
How grand 'tis to live when 'tis easy to die.
The blooms less courageous, have withered and per-
ished ;
Like sorrow to man is the frost to the flower ;
The head turning gray is the leaf turning yellow,
And Death on life's highway—but Fall in the bower.

S H O R T S E R M O N S.

THERE is always the line of shadow
Keeping apace with sun ;
Always the long, hard roadway,
Past when the race is run ;
Always the toil and striving
Before the goal is won.

There is always the time of waiting
To see the lily flower;
Always the sixty minutes
Before we reach the hour;
Always the longest stairway
Built in the highest tower.

And the wings must be strong for flying
Before the bird can sing;
The metal pass the furnace
Before the bell can ring;
We must live through Fall and Winter
Before we live in Spring.

THE MESSAGE OF THE LEAF.

THE snows are melted on the plain,
But in the deep ravine
Some pallid drifts in shrunken shapes
Lie sallow 'gainst the green.
All life awakes, and from his cave
Behind the screening rocks,
With bark which means, "I'll rob the roosts,"
Comes forth the cunning fox.

There is a rustle in the air
Of wings in northward flight,
And from his high sweep overhead
The wild goose calls at night.

The brook flows 'twixt its greening banks
Less sluggish from the hill ;
The waterfall, with stronger voice,
Awakes the sleeping mill.

At early dusk the bats fly forth
Their leathern wings to try,
And weave a flitting pattern out
Against the dusky sky.
The last year's stubble stands less straight,
The cornstalks' wrinkled fold
Lies half without and half within
The new-turned furrows' hold.

All things awake which long have slept
Except the friends who sleep,
And on their graves the grass has come
Its summer watch to keep.
There is a message in the leaf,
A promise in the rain ;
“ All vanished life will some day rise,
And somewhere live again.”

A PHILOSOPHER'S MISTAKE.

A PHILOSOPHER, once, said that words were designed
For conveyance of ideas and thought,
And full of this notion, and others as kind,
He impressed it on many a well-balanced mind
That approved of the doctrine he taught.

A man—some two hundred years after—they say,
Distinguished himself at a toast :
'Twas the office of words to *conceal*, not convey,
Any thought or idea that a man had to-day ;
And I think of the two he knew most.

THREE DAYS.

ONE day : a world of sun, a few faint shadows on the
young, green grain,
The season's work begun.

Why should the old, old story end in pain ?
Why should the fairest day set dull with rain ?

One day : a clouded sun. The sturdy reaper garners
in his corn,—

The season's work is done.

A few red lilies waiting for the morn.

Bare fields, bare hopes,—a mourner sits forlorn.

One day : no sun. The shadows gather deep.

How soon a story's told !

How soon a season's old !

Husks and a little mound where lilies stood ; rain
turned to sleet.

Another mound more long beneath the reaper's feet.

One wails and wakes,—two rest and sleep :

Why should one regret when two at last forget ?

THE LESSON.

OH, red-topped Clover, brimming the fields,
How you dare to grow I wonder !
For the scythe of the reaper will cut you down,
Or the floods may trample you under.

Oh, brown-eyed Daisy, tossing your cap,
And making the good-man weary,
The blade of the autumn with frosty cut
Shall find you at last, my dearie !

Oh, red-cheeked Roses, queening the flowers,
And Lily, the princess-daughter,
The Wind, your subject, may rise in arms,
The garden be red with slaughter !

“ Oh, that’s the lesson of life,” they say ;
“ But wait, and a newer comer,
An angel, bearing our form and face,
Shall bloom in another summer.”

HAVE I A GRATEFUL HEART, O LORD.

HAVE I a grateful heart, O Lord,
Have I a thankful mind,
That each may fly toward Thy love
As ships before the wind ?

If I have not, oh, make them, Lord,
To fill with love and trust,—
To grow from selfishness to faith,
As lilies from the dust.

All that I ask, all that I have,
Thy gifts to me preserve !
How *much* I ask, how *much* I claim,
How *little* I deserve !

Oh, keep me humble ! Make me know
How great Thy blessings are,
And through the dusk of worldly pride
Make Faith shine like a star.

EMIGRANTS.

You know there's such colonies move in the spring,
And take up their camps where the pretty birds sing,—
Such queer little emigrants, out of the land
Of Fly-away Seed, and Meadow-flower Strand.
Some are in red, and some are in blue,
And every one wearing a wee broach of dew.
With jackets of green, and slippers of brown,
And the mantle of sunlight over each gown,—
All of them tramping the meadow-grass down.
Some are in purple, and some are in yellow,
The daintiest maid, and mischievous fellow.

Some are so short, and some are so tall,
Some are so big, and some are so small ;
Some are so smooth, and some they have burs,
Some are in silks, and some are in furs ;
Some have daggers that always are drawn,
And some are as soft as India lawn.
Some are so wise, and some are so silly,—
Proud Mrs. Rose and stately Miss Lily ;
But all are emigrants into the May,
Packing their green trunks and moving away ;
And all have a ticket, brought out of the land
Of Fly-away Seed and Meadow-flower Strand.

THE PIONEER.

THERE is a line of autumn sky against some autumn trees,
But curling gracefully a spire of smoke wreathes over these,
And fresh upon a little knoll a sort of clearing made,
And primitive improvements show along a thrifty glade.

Not overmuch to please the eye, not overmuch the ear,
And yet the creaking ox-yokes make a sturdy sound of cheer ;
And round the humble house and barn some chickens cluck and crow,
And down across the wood-side bars the waiting cattle low.

But homely tasks are here to do, and here is honest
toil,
For honest bread and honest gold are hidden in the
soil.
How well it is the fruitful world was made so fair and
wide,
That diverse tasks in diverse hands may flourish side
by side !

No loneliness where Thrift abides along earth's teeming
slopes,
Where honest Poverty contends, yet keeps her hand
in Hope's.
And in the earth's remotest glades there is no fearsome
gloam
Where Heart and Health together live, and Labor
builds a home.

HINT TO THE WEATHER-MAN.

PUBLIC office is a public trust ;
But when a man his privilege betrays,
And to confiding people has consigned
Such poor assortment of all kinds of days,—
Except the pleasant ones,—'tis time to join
All parties in an earnest vote at large,
And with a public spirit now demand
This rascal shall receive his just discharge.

A weather office is no sinecure ;
But, with our present light, we understand
The scheme that made you send *one* pleasant day
To show us that you had them still on hand !
But all these weeks of slush, and rain, and fog,
Show weather-talents *not* just in our line.
The poverty of your resource is clear ;
Discharged you'll be, but if you're shrewd—resign !

SILENCE.

SILENCE is best ; every rose that blooms
About the June with its hedgerows green,
Buds and blossoms as silent as death,
As sweet as the faith of a heart unseen.

The rustling grain on its golden stalk
Has never a word in its summer said ;
Why should it speak, when speech will fill
The mouths which its harvest shall have fed ?

The slim, sweet lilies are speechless things,
But what is a word that we feel secure ?
A word may lie, and a deed deceive ;
The message of Silence alone is sure.

I know a bird by the note he sings :
I know a flower by the scent it yields ;
I know a tree by the fruit it bears,
And weeds from grain by the look of the fields.

But never a friend by a trick of speech,
And never a heart by a face's smile ;
For a foe may frame me a honeyed word,
And a smiling lip may be full of wile.

Silence is speechful ; do not ask
For the idle words of a tongue to-day ;
The speech of God is the silent thought
Of a faith more strong than our words can say.

THE CHIMNEY GOBLIN.

THERE'S a goblin in the chimney,
With an impish shriek and cry,
Who, with sounds of mocking laughter,
Varied now by moan or sigh,
Holds high carnival and chorus
With his kin beneath the eaves,
Or, with melancholy wailings,
In the chimney sits and grieves.

Every household has this goblin,
In his sooty perch on high,
Who, with answering hoot and whistle,
Jeers the winds as they go by ;
Madly dancing through the eave-troughs,
Whirling round the corners fast,
Or, with scampering on the shingles,
Adding tumult to the blast.

And the little chimney goblin,
With his shiny, grimy face,
Leaping out in dusky smoke-wreaths,
Joins the spirits in the race ;
And they hold a noisy frolic,
All the sprites on mischief bent,
Like the witches in the fable,
Who with flails to Gath were sent.

So I fancy, as I listen
To the weird sounds of the wind,
And I think the goblin's talking
Some strange jargon to his kind,
As they sit among the cinders,
Cross-legged like a lot of Turks,
Sending soot, and sparks, and smoke-clouds
Out from where the goblin lurks.

And the merry little fellow,
Whistling down the chimney gay,
Sits there in serene contentment
Through the long hours of the day ;
Sits there, laughing, singing, crooning
Old strange legends to himself,
For the sooty chimney goblin
Is a merry little elf.

M Y F R I E N D.

I HAVE a friend, a dear old friend,
 Of aspect somewhat gaunt and grim,
And yet, when other friendships end,
 I never once have doubted him.
I meet him sometimes by the way ;
 He never makes me sign nor speaks,
And yet I know, some coming day,
 That I shall be the one he seeks.

I meet him sometimes in the night,
 This friend whom I can ever trust ;
His garments show a ghostly white,
 His hands are full of crumpled dust.
I feel no jealousy when he
 Makes long pause at my neighbor's door,
For when he comes that day for me
 I shall have found them gone before.

He never breaks *his* friendship's strength,—
 I need not sigh my heart away,
For if I wait he comes at length,
 And comes forever more to stay.
Ah, friend, old friend, who never yet
 Betrayed the trust of life and breath !
Remembering us when we forget
 The *truest* friend we have—is Death.

THE DEAD MUSICIAN.

PUT out the lights, and muffle the organ-keys
With the darkness ; wall them round
With the stones of silence. Who touches these,
Who stops to waken a slumbering sound,
Sleeping under the ivory keys,
Whitely under the silent keys,
Shall hear the wailing of souls in pain,
The roll of thunder, and wash of rain,
Sobbing out of the depths of night ;

For the hands which wrought with the organ's speech
Now lie than the organ-keys more white,
Out of all human clasp and reach.

Singing to silence, strife to peace,
Speech, to the muteness of all the dead ;
Each to that limit where each must cease,
Unsung, unwritten, unthought, unsaid.
And other hands on the organ-keys,
The solemnly silent organ-keys,
Shall turn their muteness to each great tone
That the vanished hands and the heart have known.

Out of the finite soul a cry
Goes up to the silences of the spheres,—
“ We heard the voice and the tone pass by
To the yonder-side of a cloud of tears ;

Will *they* return in the coming years?"

The stars grew misty, and all in vain
The cry went echoing on again.

* * * * *

But silence dwelt in the far-off spheres,
And the clouds were heavy, and broke with tears.

IF I COULD DIE FOR A DAY.

If I could die for a day and go
To that country lying yonder,
Who of all that I love and know
Would miss me here, I wonder?

If I could die to outward sense,
And hear them speaking of me,
Would it be worth Death's consequence
To know if any love me?

Ah ! Nature's process seems so slow,
Her speech so mistranslated,
'Tis hardly worth our while to know
If we are loved or hated.

NOVEMBER.

DULL days and dripping eaves ; sad voices in the fields ;
The rust of stubble, and the brown of leaves,
Like Time's oblivion for the soul which grieves,
Alone remain of all the summer yields.
The reaper sleeps and rests ; sheathed is the sickle of
the year ;
Shadows gather from advancing wests ;
There is a lonesome wind which fills deserted nests,
And icy frost which glitters like a frozen tear.

Not like the time when living things rejoice ;
Not like the time when even graves put forth,
With swallows thronging summers south to north,
And field-flowers, tender as a loving voice.
Not like the May, which hath a smile and not a tear,
But days with thistles pricking in the hours,
And little mounds of dust where stood the flowers,
And sighs of dying leaves along the year.

THE FALSE PROPHET.

SIDI MAHDI BEN SENUSSI

Six years studied and six years prayed ;
Six years poured over the Koran leaves.
“Lo !” cried the Sheiks, “the Prophet grieves ;”

For, in dingiest robes arrayed,
 Day after day he wept and prayed,—
 Sidi Mahdi Ben Senussi,
 Loved of the Lord, and not to die.

Sidi Mahdi Ben Senussi
 Sat by the bank of the Nile to wait ;
 Turned the page of the holy book,
 All the pleasures of men forsook,—
 “Here till the time is ripe I wait,”—
 Two to the six till six were eight,—
 Sidi Mahdi Ben Senussi
 Watched the Nile as the years went by.

Sidi Mahdi Ben Senussi
 Out of the mouth of the cavern trod ;
 Grew the lotus about the door,
 Came the pilgrim to heed his lore.
 Out of the holy cavern trod
 He whose path is devised of God.
 Sidi Mahdi Ben Senussi,
 Mohammed Achmed, Great am I !

Sidi Mahdi Ben Senussi,
 Cried, “Ye faithful, come follow me !
 Twice already have I been named,
 Chosen of Allah that Riouf be shamed ;
 Come ye therefore and follow me,
 Prophet of Truth, for I am he !
 Sidi Mahdi Ben Senussi,
 Loved of the Lord, and not to die !”

Sidi Mahdi Ben Senussi
 Trampled the lotus underfoot ;
 “ Here the sword of the Faith I raise !
 Follow ye it to Allah’s praise ! ”
 Many the wound that then took root
 Under the tread of the Prophet’s foot.
 Sidi Mahdi Ben Senussi
 Waved the sword of the Faith on high.

Sidi Mahdi Ben Senussi !
 There by the great Nile let him lie ;
 Eat of the lotus that grows therein,
 Eat of the lotus and cleanse his sin.
 There where the white Nile floateth by
 Learn that it comes to man to die ;—
 Sidi Mahdi Ben Senussi,
 One of the many who live to die.

SOUL-SILENCE.

Out of the silence, sometimes,
 That lieth about my soul,
 A voice like that of an angel
 To its nearest gate will roll.
 I can almost catch its meaning,
 I can almost hear the word
 For which I have always listened,
 Yet somehow never heard.

When I have yearned to grasp it,
With its meaning almost plain,
It has faded back to silence,
And my soul has yearned in vain.
Oh, could I solve the secret,
The song I would sing to-day
Would roll through the coming ages,
And live, and live, alway !

My time faints like the lily,
It dieth like the rose,
And I know that hidden meaning
Will not on earth unclose.
Yet as the bee for honey,
And as the day for sun,
My soul was made for longing
Since first that soul begun.

The grandest chord of music,
The greatest line of pen,
Now must remain unwritten ;—
Will they be written *Then*?
The picture that the artist
With soul with yearning faint
Sees ever in his visions,
He never here can paint.

The marble dream the sculptor
Would hew out from the stone,
Hides in its rocky prison
Till dust reclaims its own.

The poem that the poet
Can almost put to word,
Is sweeter than all poems
That human ears have heard.

Oh, if that vast soul-silence
Could solve itself to speech,
With all its great, grand meanings
Forevermore in reach,
Perhaps no need of Heaven
Were in the human heart,
Since yearning, longing, waiting,
Of earth could be no part.

THE FAIRY FUDGEY WUDGE.

THERE was a little fairy, and her name was Fudgey
Wudge,
And up a dainty lily-stalk she was obliged to trudge,—
Because you see her house was there, without a step
outside,
And as she was obliged to walk, you know she couldn't
ride ;
So she hired a little spider a tiny rope to weave,
So quite unlike a rope it was a fay it would deceive ;
And the busy little spider spun a thread as fine as silk,
That should look well to leave hanging from a lily
white as milk,—

That should be a proper ladder for so wee a fay to use,
With a pair of silken stockings, and some diamond-
buckled shoes ;

That should be so nice and even it should never tear
her gown

By Miss August Month imported, made of woven this-
tle-down ;

And that shouldn't make her apron look as ragged as a
fright,

For a ragged rose-leaf apron would be a sorry sight.

You never could have told her if you'd seen her in the
day,

Because you see the sunlight's just the color of a fay :
And you never could have told her if you'd seen her
in the night,

For she looked so like the moonlight coming down so
thin and white.

She has inventions modern in her little lily cup,
And when she wants for water she holds her pitcher up ;
And when she wants for sunlight, she puts the curtain
by,

And down will come a sunbeam from 'way up in the sky ;
So she catches in her pitcher the choicest bit of dew,
And through the open window she lets the sunlight
through.

She has a pretty cousin, Mister Fairy Shiny Budge,
And sometimes he comes riding to see Miss Fudgey
Wudge.

He rides upon a fire-fly, and it is a pretty sight,
For he has a little lantern that he carries out at night.

Then he puts his horse in stable, and he shuts him up
so tight,
But you can catch the twinkle of a little bit of light.
And sometimes in the evening you can see them in the
sky,
For when they go a journey they fly up pretty high.
And sometimes in the morning you will find them on
the ground,
But they have dropped their lantern, and it's nowhere
to be found ;
So if you see a lily some lovely summer-night,
Shut up tight and fastened, but full of golden light,
You will know it is the lantern of Mister Fairy Shiny
Budge,
And he has come to visit his cousin Fudgey Wudge.

G O E T H E.

How many a star has cast its rays
Into our shrouding night,
Then followed on its trackless ways
And passed for evermore from sight !
How many a mind has shown its power,
As we catch glimpses of a star,
For one brief, flitting, earthly hour,
Swift-measured,—as our lifetimes are !

So wert thou, Goethe, born to soar
For few brief earth-nights in our skies,
Then passed thou on for evermore
Into that land where thought ne'er dies.

Days come 'twixt stars;—before is seen
Twin-mind to that which perished then,
There shall be many days between,
And starless nights for other men.

A L A S !

O SPRING, when your tardy coming
Shall gather the flowers again,
With their tiny cups upholden,
All filled with the summer rain;—
When the white frost-flower departeth,
And gay is the robe of the year,
I shall miss a blossom that faded,—
A flower that no longer is here.

When the sweet-breathed hay is lying
Piled into windrows long,
And the birds from the sunny south-land
Are singing their happiest song,
I shall miss the bird that was singing
In the spring of another year,
I shall miss the song that was ended
When winter and cold were here.

When cattle are knee-deep standing
In meadow-grass green and cool,
And the swallows are building houses
From clay by the quiet pool,

I shall think of the new house standing
With its roof of waving grass,
For the swallows' houses are builded
Of the self-same clay,—alas !

Alas ! for those little builders
Are working together to-day,
But we are forever divided
By the walls of that house of clay.
Alas ! for my work seems ended !
Alas ! that that grave should be
So small, that its grassy cover
Has never yet covered me.

F R A G M E N T S F R O M " V I O L A . "

WAS ever mind which made
A trifle of a woe, or could forget
A sorrow with such readiness as joy ?
Nay, like a ghost one's woe does walk with them
By day as well as night ; and prowls abroad,
Sits at our feast or funeral-board alike,
And smileless mocks our efforts to be gay
With its grim visage. For a secret woe
Is like a secret sin ; it will not die,
It will rise up and cast its shadow dark
Upon our joy. And secret woe, like sin,
Begets a fear, lest prying eyes shall see

Our skeleton, or listening ears shall hear
The clanking of its bones ; or some bold hand
Searching amidst the lumber-rooms of life
For things of interest which its own life lacks,
Shall find the dry old bones, and hold the hand,—
Those grizzly fingers which our own have held
So long we know not how to drop their clasp.

* * * * *

Venice, farewell !

City of the Sea, rising from its waves
Thy siren form ; melting into those waves,
Until thy shadowy palaces reveal
Scarce which are shadows and which substances.
Beneath Italian skies thy wide lagoons
Still silver on. Beneath Italian moons
Thou'rt still a ghost, bedecked with lamps which gleam
Adown thy past,—and thou hast much of past,
For thou art getting old, thou Bride of Years !

Some day thy marble palaces shall slip
Into the quiet sea, and thou shalt sit
No more its queen, but hide beneath the waves
Which lap thy feet year after year, and wait
Thy coming. And that Bridge of Sighs which casts
Its shadow o'er that dark lagoon, shall slip
Into its shadow, just as we exchange
At last our substance for the shadow.

* * * * *

Religion with some men is like the bone
The dog dropped, when he snarled to think its like
Was in another canine mouth. The stream
Soon hides them both. And when one man doth yearn

To snatch and change his fellow's creed, to fight
With him for holding it, he drops his own.
This may be faith for men ! I do not think
It is the faith of angels. If with love
One cannot say, " My brother, this thy creed
Hath lack of breadth, and scope, and power for good ;
It will not meet thy needs, nor bring thee joy,
Nor send thee happiness, nor make the world
Better because that thou believest thus ;
Then, therefore, take thou mine, and find therein
Much comfort for thee, and much hope and grace
For thy poor soul, and love for thee and thine."'
And if he take it, and abide the change,
Why, well ! but should he not,—then use the sword ;
That is man's logic !

When man learns to love,—

As he will learn a few worlds hence,—to love
Unmixed with hatred, and with spite, and wrong,
Then will God issue his next book ; and these
Shall learn to read its pages where they see
Only its shadowy covers now ! And man
Shall drop his tiger mask, and grow more grand,
Through wisdom, charity, and love.

* * * * *

O, thou lost arts of Egypt, Greece, and Rome !
We are a race of builders small beside
Thy perished wonders. We are not alone
A race progressive, for the dust of time
Has sifted over greater works than we
Shall ever leave behind to show our hands
Have wrought. Yet monuments of mind shall live
From our to-day, when blocks of marble fade,

And crumble with its sister granite back
To the light dust which moulds the rock or man.
The works of brain shall live when works of hand
Are faded with that hand away. For these
Must perish.

Immortality the soul

Alone commands. For shrinking through the dusks
Of our existences we look for it ;
Inhabiting our houses built by hands
We wait for it ; exploring the beyond
We seek for it ; look, wait, seek for, find not !
But what's not found still beckons to the search.
That which we have, we seek not ; thus it is.
For, if you drop a diamond in the field,
All eagerly you part the flowers and grass
For that small spark of fire which mayhap lies
Against some tangled root, and you mistake
The glitter of some dew-drop in the sun,—
Embodying the light within itself
As if it were a fragment of God's day—
Mistake it for your own lost gem. But 'tis not ;
And when you run to grasp it,—lo, it falls !
It was a wondrous thing. 'Tis but a splash
Of moisture on the earth which drinks it up.
'Twas but a drop of water in the sun ;
'Twould not have lasted long, yet your rude hand
Destroyed it ere its time. Why did you so ?
That rare, bright jewel on the sword of Day
Just drawn from its gem-covered scabbard,—Dawn.

You find your diamond and you treasure it,
But seek it not. And if 'tis never found

The search goes on. And with it always lost,
You never pass that field without a hope
It may reveal itself in one swift flash,
Darting along some line of azure air
As if it were a needle, pricking sight
Into its splendor.

So it is with love—

Or with our souls. Who hath not love will look
Along the meadow of his life for it ;
And if we sometimes do mistake the dew
Of false affection which may beckon us,
But shivers at our near approach and falls
When we would clasp it,—for the diamond Love,—
Be not surprised. All things of worth were made
To counterfeit. Who cannot hold the real
Sometimes becomes content to hold the sham,—
If his small world believe it to be real!
And this same clownish world will caper 'round
A shining humbug, and cry out, "A star!"
Till some philosopher display the means
Whereby some opaque rock is made to seem
A body luminous by borrowed light.
And while the world is elbowing itself
To catch a glimpse of this tremendous thing,
It turns its back upon the small, fine light,
Intense as life, which has electrified
And made resplendent yonder huge, dull stone.

* * * *

Seek through the mist in whichsoever way
You will, you find always some little flower
Of knowledge grows which you may pluck to your
Advantage. Seek, but do not think to pierce

Unfathomed deeps with your small wand of wisdom.
Rather learn to separate life's right and wrong,
And live to-day as you would live if Christ
Should question you to-morrow. If it ends,—
All yesterdays have ended with some night,—
Be sure man is a higher kind of growth
Than these field-flowers. Yet, if he wilfully
Do choose to dwarf with self his better soul,
Poisoned within by sin, or sears his roots
By evil,—as that poor weed he withers !
Man cannot so transgress his nature's laws
Without his punishment. And if he live,
Or if he die hereafter, he lives best
And happiest his life who lives most right.

* * * * *

It does not matter much where we are laid
When life is gone. It may be in the tomb,
It may be in the sea. If in the grave,
Our friends may scatter flowers, and every spring
Shall spin her leaf-green garment from the web
The year left over, and embroider flowers
Along the sunny pattern of her days.
But if we sleep in the great, silent sea,
And lose the minist'ring of friendly hands,
Why, who shall say we sleep alone? Not I!
There will be lilies made of pearls to bloom,
And roses from the coral-reefs will start,
And cypress shades of sea-weed overhang
Our rocking grave. And never any feet
Shall tread above our place of rest. We sleep
With great-eyed people of the deep, who float
About, around us. And no silence fills

A grassy grave so deep as that which lies
Its fathoms under water.

So they sewed
His thick shroud 'round him, and he sought alone
The little grave where never spade had been,
Nor hand prepared his coming. Weep not thou !
One great, salt tear lies over him to-day.

LOVE ETERNAL.

I AM living in the sunlight,
But your dust, dear heart, true friend,
Lies beneath these summer grasses,—
Ah, that love hath such an end !

I go on, but you have passed me :
Out betwixt the stars you went.
I saw not that radiant pathway ;
On this dust mine eyes were bent.

Oh, beloved ! down the ages
Time's eternal seas roll on,
Peopled with the craft of angels,
Bearing each its one soul on.

'Midst those multitudes immortal
Shall I know those ghostly spars,
When to me the years shall open
That same pathway 'twixt the stars ?

By *this* token I shall know them,—
Ah, the signal will be plain !
Love Eternal ! On the ages,
Pinned with stars, let it remain.

HOW DREAMS COME TRUE.

SHE slipped a piece of wedding-cake
Under the pillow upon her bed ;
“I wonder what I shall dream about ?”
With a happy sigh to herself she said ;
“I wonder if ever a dream comes true ?”
O busy thoughts, will you fly away ?—
“Mine never did that ever I knew ;
But that’s no sign they will not—some day.”

“I hope ‘twill be nice,”—with a pretty pout,
And a little toss of the golden head,
Then she blew the winking candle out,
And said her prayers, and went to bed.
“I never shall dream if I lie awake,”—
O waking dreams, *ye* are there, no doubt,
But the last thought fades into dreamland’s realm,—
“I wonder—*who*—I shall—dream about ?”
* * * * * * * * *
“What did you dream in the canny spell
Of the wedding-cake ?” a fond voice said.

“I—don’t remember.” O red, red rose,
 What have you done that you hang your head ?
 Two little hands in a strong, firm hold ;—
 “Then may I tell *my* dream—to *you*? ”
 A whisper, a shy voice half afraid,—
 “Isn’t it funny how dreams come true? ”

FALSE AND FAIR.

AH, fatally false and fatally fair,
 With the look of a saint in her soul at rest,—
 With a faint white rose in her fair brown hair,
 And three white roses upon her breast !
 I loved as a man loves once a-life,
 I hated as few men hate, thank God !
 With love and passion forever at strife
 In the old, old paths all life has trod.

Had I given life,—had I taken life,
 In the frenzy I felt ’twould have been the same ;
 But she lured me on to the point of the knife
 With a thousand graces I cannot name.
 And I slew him there at her very door ;—
 He lay at her feet as a man lies dead ;—
 She shrieked, and shrank at the sight of his gore,—
 The man she had hated with blood unshed.

She threw herself on his pulseless breast,
 She dabbled with blood that fair brown hair,—
 The woman who bade me nor stop, nor rest
 Till the deed was done,—and she cursed me there !

Ah, fatally false and fatally fair !
God grant their souls with the saints now rest !
For she died with a white rose in her hair,
And three *red* roses upon her breast.

THE DESERTED HOUSE.

IT stands a good bit from the town, where it has stood
a weary time ;
Though slowly, surely falling down, 'tis in its loneliness sublime.
The vacant rooms are wide and high, the door is broad, the windows tall,
And gusty echoes seek and hide within the dim and shadowed hall.

Time was when it was filled with happy shapes and voices young ;
The voices long ago were stilled, and shadows from the shapes have sprung.
The mildew and the cobwebs strive to hold the ceiling in its place :
It seems like something *once* alive, and these are Age-marks on its face.

The winds go visiting at will, from cellar to the attic high,—
But for their whispering it is still, save when the rabbit scampers by.

The bats have corners where they cling throughout the sunny-time of day ;
There are a few wild birds that sing, but all the tenants moved away.

The porch is like a hand stretched out through all the bleak, November rain,
Half in yearning, half in doubt, and almost human in its pain ;
As if it said, “ I once was fair, I had a time of spring and sun,—
But I grew old with years and care, and they have left me, one by one.”

I do not know why it should seem so like some dear old friend in tears :
Its voice is silent as a dream, a dream that saddens and endears.
It looks so lonesome in the rain, the dead leaves piled about the door ;—
I shall not visit it again,—it speaks too strongly of its yore !

I cannot bring the faces back,—for they are ashes in the grave ;
I cannot shorten Time’s long track ; that which has perished,—who can save ?
An owl, hard by within her tree, makes solemn answer,
“ Who ! who ! who ! ”
You cannot bring the dead to me, nor I restore the past to you !

DO NOT FORGET ME.

Do not forget me. When the world
 Bids me to join its poppy-sleep,
And turning its great face away
 Leaves me a lonesome watch to keep,—
 Do not forget ; remember then
 I loved you more than other men.

Do not forget me. In long nights
 Of vigil upon land or sea,
When all the stars smile back at you,
 And you through them look up at me,—
 Remember still there is a part
 Of memory due a faithful heart.

Do not forget me. One more swath
 Of Time cuts down we know not who.
His harvests go forever on :
 His sickle next may swing for you.
 Oh, memory's sun should never set !
 Remember me,—do not forget.

THE ELF IN THE MOON.

THERE'S a sly little elf who sits up in the moon,
And never goes napping save just when it's noon ;
And then for the whole of one little minute
He curls up his toes like a little dead linnet,

And shuts up the corners of both roguish eyes,
And sleeps out his small nap alone in the skies.

Now, this little elf has the queerest of trades,—
He sends all the rain-drops to little grass-blades ;
He sends all the sprinkles that water the grains,
And all of the drinking for poor thirsty plains ;
And into the bucket that's set in the moon
He has to keep dipping with one little spoon.

Now, wouldn't you think
He'd be ready to sink,
From dipping the spoon
All the time in the moon ?
And a one-minute nap,
With the spoon in his lap,
Must be pretty slim
For a worker like him.
And, wouldn't you think
He'd slip in a wink
Now and then on the sly ?
But he can't if he'd try.

Now, this fairy bucket is full to the brim,
And I should suspect that a nice little swim
Wouldn't be very bad in the midst of the summer ;
But, oh, dear, no ! you never catch him.
For if he should lay down the spoon for a second,
And all of the time that he'd lose should be reckoned,
Why, what do you think would become of the elf ?
He'd just have to turn round and eat up himself.
Wouldn't that be a funny thing for him to do ?
And what would be left when the elf had got through ?

WHEN HARVEST-FIELDS ARE GOLDEN.

WHEN harvest-fields are golden,
And reapers reap their grain,
I think of harvests olden
I may never reap again.

For in each vanished season
Small harvest have I reapt,
And with regretful reason
How oft since then have wept.

Man hath not gift to borrow
Exemption from the years ;
Some seed sown, to our sorrow,
Will yield a crop of tears.

Some live to reap, some perish
Along the golden path,
And some with fond hope cherish
A promised aftermath.

DRIP, DRIP, DRIP.

DRIP, drip, drip,—the sad rain telling his beads ;
The slow, cold tear of age in the year,
That droppeth while no man heeds.

The day is gray and the night is here ;
The sun has set and the stars are near.
Who lists to the dull rain over the shutter,—
More full of prayers than a tongue can utter ?

Drip, drip, drip,—the altar is hidden and bare ;
The lights are out, and the gloom of doubt
Is shrouding it everywhere.

Who knows how the white earth breaks her sleep ?
Who knows how the young vines learn to creep ?
Who knows that the prayers of the year are told
With the frozen beads of the frost in the wold ?

Drip, drip, drip,—the white earth dons her green ;
The huntsman wakes the stag in the brakes,
And the new grass grows between.

Then old ties break, and new loves make,
And the old grave's grassy billow
Where tears were shed—when all is said—
Forms young love's happy pillow.

LINES TO A HUMAN SKULL.

I.

MAN puts a thousand reasons by,
Not one of which will tell him why
God's living images must die.

He spurns the dust upon the ground :
Here dwells the worm, and round and round
It wriggles in its earthly bound.

Yet, from this dust was man create,
And, by the changeless laws of fate,
To it returns he, soon or late.

II.

How strange, that in this dust there lies
A tenant for the upper skies,
A chrysalid for Paradise !

How strange, that in earth's rotting side
The wonder of a flower should hide !
Here is corruption purified.

What miracle so great as this,
That in the unclean earth there is
The lily's possibilities ?

III.

The soul, intangible and vast,
In this flesh-prison had been cast :
The meanest worm finds wings at last.

Oh, great revivifying power !
The lowest weed, the poorest flower,
Through thee hath an immortal dower.

And all these miracles have worth
If flesh, returning to its earth
Through flesh-decay, find its soul-birth.

IV.

Yet hath death's secret not been found.
This shape lay in that fallow ground
Which owns the churchyard for its bound.

This groundwork of what was a face,
Of what hath gone is but a trace :
The type and symbol of a race.

Oh, could it speak, how would it clear
That mystery, unsolved, but near,
That sphinx-like to us must appear !

v.

It knows the secret of its tomb.
Through many a year of dayless gloom
It held a watch with time and doom.

Sphinx-like it turns its graven face ;
It sees man is a dying race,
Forever giving others place.

To flit away, a shade forgot,
A shadow, falling on a spot
That when the sun comes, knows it not.

VI.

Unseen, man came from Somewhere here :
Unseen, to Somewhere, far or near,
He must return and disappear.

A mystery he was, and is :
He writes his life in histories,
And touches subtile mysteries,—

But touches with the finger-tips :
And when his life's sun westward dips
He slips away with silent lips.

VII.

He slips away : but leaves behind
This shape which held the active mind
And made it master midst its kind.

He followed life's long-trodden path,
Lived as man lives, died as man hath,—
A sort of human aftermath.

But that which *was* the mind, the soul,
When life demanded its last dole,
Hath paid its body back as toll.

THE DROUGHT.

PARCHED as with a fever, summer
Lay upon the crisping grass.
And the sun's red arrows slanting
Through the dry wind, hot and panting,
Let no cooling zephyr pass.

Shriveled with the heat the pasture
Gave no food to flock or kine.
But the famished cattle, dying,
On its burning breast were lying
As men lie when drunk with wine.

Fell no dew with evening's coming,
 On the plain, white as a fleece.
And the moon, a flaming crescent,
 Saw the gaunt fox and the pheasant
 To their coverts pass in peace.

Stars were sparks caught into distance
 From some conflagration vast.
And our parching planet turning
 In its anguish, saw them burning,—
 Burning night away at last.

Famine, fever, plague and madness,
 Stalked across the sterile lands.
To some mighty power beseeching
 The poor, withered grain seemed reaching
 With its empty, seedless hands.

But to-day there is no semblance
 Upon nature's mirror-face,
Showing that year like the summer
 Which is now the newest comer,—
 Neither token, sign, nor trace

Of that withered, faded season
 That is yesterday to-day.
In this text there's necromancy,
 Strength to bear life's fact and fancy,—
 “*Even this must pass away.*”

SONG OF THE SICKLE.

I AM the sickle that cuts the grain,
The billowing, yellowing, golden grain.
I am the sickle with glittering feet
That races swift through the high, tall wheat,
And ever and ever I sing and sing,
 Kling, kling, kling, kling,
I busily work and busily sing,
 Kling, kling.

I am the sickle of harvest-days,
The shimmering, glimmering harvest-days.
When the reaper grasped me I clanged and said,
“The kernels are full and the roots are dead,
The wheat is headed and ripe,” I sang,
 Kling, clang, kling, clang,
“The bins are empty and waiting,” I sang,
 Kling, clang.

I am the sickle of strong, blue steel,
The bloodless sword of the harvest-weal.
I trip the grain as it stands so tall,
I love to see it totter and fall.
“You have had your day,” I shout and sing,
 Klang, kling, clang, kling,
“You are the subjects and I the king,”
 Klang, kling.

I am the sickle, the friend to man,
Busily doing whatever I can.

I work for man, and in him I trust,
Yet he sometimes leaves me a prey to rust.

“Man’s debts not always are paid,” I sing,
Kling, kling, kling, kling,
“He often forgets best friends,” I sing,
Kling, kling.

GOOD-BY, SWEETHEART.

GOOD-BY, sweetheart ; take a kiss
To the angels as you go.
By such messengers as this
Love is sent to God, I know.

Love *thou* wert, and love thou art ;
Love begot thee for a day,—
Love, that rends the human heart
When God gives and takes away.

Good-by, sweetheart ; by those eyes
I shall know thee when I fare
Through the streets of Paradise,
Looking for my lost loves there.

Good-by, sweetheart ; tiny lives,
Speechless baby-lips like thine,
Mould the word that saves and shrives,—
Makes the human grow divine.

Good-by, sweetheart ; take a kiss
To the angels as you go.
By such messengers as this
Love goes back to God, I know.

WITH THE AGING OF THE YEAR.

WITH the aging of the year,
With the running of Time's sands
Through a thousand different seasons,
Through a thousand different lands,
Then dear memories arise
And the vanished loved appear,
With the coming of the frost,
With the aging of the year.

With the browning of the leaf
And the baring of the bough
To the cold and gusty winter,
Earth was then as it is now.
And to sad-eyed Thought on-looking
Time long dead is new and near,
And lost shapes return in fancy
With the aging of the year.

With the aging of the life,
And the whitening of the head,
Following Fate's mystic circle
Thought returns to scenes long dead.

And the faded dream, the fancy,
That was hope, or smile, or tear,
On the homeward track seems brighter,
With the aging of the year.

With the aging of the year,
With the passing of the green,
With Life's saps returning earthward
Through their passage-ways unseen,
With the flitting of the swallow,
With the frost-days drawing near,
Hearths grow brighter, hearts grow warmer,
With the aging of the year.

THE DEAD POET.—W. C. B.

MAKE room for the poet, my beautiful summer;
Make room for the singer whose singing is done;
Give place in your great, throbbing heart for his ashes,
Remembering few seasons such emblems have won.
Behold, after labor the sleep of the righteous!
How calm and how peaceful, how placid his rest!
Close in the sanctified clasp of God's acre,
With daisy-wrought coverlet over his breast.

And there, with your blessing, my beautiful summer,
The blessing of bloom, and of bird-song, and flowers,
Akin to pale millions who watch o'er his slumber,
We leave in your keeping this aged bard of ours.

And coming and going forever around us,
The quick for life's battle, the dead for its rest,
Still pass the visible forms of all loved ones
Into the invisible Realms of the Blest.

AFTER THE END.

No dripping rain in the chamber low,
No patter on that green roof ;
Only the sound of the flowers at work,
And grass-trolls weaving their woof.
No whistling winds in the gables shriek,
No casements with noisy din ;
Only the whirr of the hidden wheels
As the busy seasons spin.

No hurried feet upon stony paves,
No voices in outcry shrill ;
Only the dormouse building her nest,
And the blind-mole under the hill.
None of the wailing of aching hearts,
No struggle without reward ;
Only the ring of the reaper's scythe,
And the rustle of grain is heard.

None of this counting of days and years,
As tolled by the clanging bells ;
Only the partridge beating his drum
The time of the season tells.

No weary waiting belated dawn,
No lingering, late-gone light ;
Only the lark at his morning hymn,
And whippoorwill telling the night.

'Tis only the laying aside a flower
Too withered to fill the vase,
And putting the dead thing out of sight
Where none may its fading trace.
But who shall say that the rare perfume
Of the rose with the rose has fled ?
And who shall say that the loved are lost,
When the grave is made for the dead ?

T O - D A Y .

TO-DAY : a seam stitched in between
Our yesterdays and morrows,
Wherein the needle Time has set
Its point 'twixt joys and sorrows.

ON DAYS WHEN THE FIELDS ARE WARM WITH SUN.

ON days when the fields are warm with sun,
And the reapers croon through the drowsy air,
Till the west burns red and the day is done,
My heart is a stranger to grief or care.
But after the shadows are grown so long
That the hills are toppled across the plain,
And the night-bird croaks a discordant song,
Then memories rise with a sudden pain.

The wraith of a love that is long since dead
Creeps up with the mist from the marshy glen,—
The ghost of a passion whose being fled
When it hid its face from the sight of men.
It motions me with its voiceless lips,
It haunts my soul with its woful eyes ;
It floats in the dark like phantom ships
Borne on by the tide when the land-breeze dies.

It points to me with its clammy hands,—
Oh, what is so cold as a dead love's clasp !
I might lose my soul in distant lands,—
I should leave my heart in its stony grasp.
But after the stars put out their fires,
And the clouds hang low in the misty morn,
My spirit rises o'er dead desires,
And laughs their shadowy ghosts to scorn.

For the world is full of its vanished dead,
And hearts have sepulchres hidden away ;
But yesterday's night like a ghost has fled,
And yesterday's grief is a joy to-day.

THERE IS AN HOUR 'TWIXT NIGHT AND MORN.

THERE is an hour 'twixt night and morn,
An hour full of strange silence and still stranger sound,
When one may hear mysterious murmuring in tree and
corn,
As earth's tired wheels go softly round and round.

A slumberous hour, when dark-faced Night,
Dark Night, full of strong passion, sets a long, deep
kiss
Upon the dear awakening Day's soft bosom, sweet and
white,
And she flames scarlet with the sudden bliss,

And in the east glows red as fire :
When Sleep's faint poppies touch the lids, and only
dreams
Connect the soul with earth and what its waking
thoughts desire,
Then hearts scarce know the real from what real
seems.

In that weird hour, gray as the grave,
 Yet lighted with an inner fire which bares the soul,
 In glides the serpent Memory with wide, calm eyes, to
 save
 The Past from deep forgetful seas which 'round it roll.

O large-eyed Memory, as wise
 As was thy mate in Eden, wind thy cool, soft coils
 About my burning brow, and brain, and my hot eyes :
 O, keep me ever in thy saving toils !

QUESTIONING.

If there is a doubt in your heart to-day
 That stretches its shadow across to me,
 If you cannot look in my eyes and say,
 " My trust is perfect, and full, and free,"
 For the sake of a day that would work us woe,
 I pray you pity and tell me so.

When you look in my eyes and kiss my face,
 And hold me close to your throbbing heart,
 Is there ever in it a hint or place
 That tells you we could in the future part ?
 Does a doubt, as faint as an undrawn breath,
 Suggest a parting that was not Death ?

Dear love, search so deep in your heart, I pray,
 That its dimmest corner shall come to light,
 Then look me straight in the eyes and say
 The truth as the truth seems just and right ;

If your love can change,—ah, love does, I know!—
I pray you pity and tell me so.

THE YEAR IS OLD.

O, a winterly day, and the hours grow colder,

The year is old.

I kissed her mouth and her fair, white shoulder,
Love grew gray, and time grew older;

Oh, dream of dreams, how long it seems!

The year is old.

There's a winterly land, and a path frost-hidden:

The year is old.

When age creeps into the heart unbidden,
Then one may dream of the past unhidden.

O, day of days, ye went love's ways:

The year is old.

I kissed her mouth and her warm chin under,

The year is old.

I kissed her throat in its marble wonder,

I kissed her lips as they cleft asunder,—

O, lips divine, ye have once been mine!

The year is old.

Sweet mouth, sweet chin, and dimpled shoulder!

The year is old.

Bold as I was, grim Death was bolder;

He laid her low where the fairest moulder,—

Where centuries seem but a long, deep dream.

The year is old.

S U P P L I C A T I O N.

HAVE you room in your heart, O Nature, for me,
Have you room on your breast, Earth-Mother,
Will you take in your keeping, and into your world,
A creature who comes from this/other ?
Who comes with the passion and comes with the sin,
And brings but its horrible blindness,—
This only to offer, and yet crying out
For love and for pitying kindness.

Have you room in your heart, O Nature, for me,
Have you room, O Earth-Mother tender ?
I ask for so much, yet have naught in return
But wearisome burdens to render.
To ask,—not to give, nor bestow,—but to take,
With selfishness mortal and human ;
Make room on your breast, and, O Nature, make room
In your heart for a world-wearied woman.

THE FROST'S WHITE FEET HAVE TRAMPLED DOWN.

THE frost's white feet have trampled down
 The hardy, armored thistle,
And 'cross the sleeping fields I hear
 The winter wind's shrill whistle.
The lichen clings with withered hands,
 The bracken bends and shivers,
And icy bridges set their piers
 Along the fleeing rivers.

Tired Summer raised her sunburned arms
 And wrapped the fall about her;
Poor faded beauty ! how the world
 Goes gayly on without her.
Her fair handmaidens, flower by flower,
 Of loving grief have perished.
The snow has set its headstones cold
 Above each shape she cherished.

Now, like a boy's uncertain notes,
 The snow-bird pipes where thrushes
Flew down the summer's golden skies
 And sang amidst her rushes.
And 'long the brook-bed's frozen lane,
 Like white-armed ghosts, the birches
Bewail the vanished choirs who turned
 Their groves to Nature's churches.

Cold-eyed, cold-lipped, cold-hearted king !
What homage can we render
Thy passionless and cruel sway,
Usurping queen's more tender ?
O, warm-eyed June, graved with thy flowers,
One lover will remember
The bunch of roses at thy belt
That withered to December.

A F T E R - T I M E .

AFTER-TIME ; what cometh then ?
After that which ageth men,
After that which brands the years
As they pass, with burning tears,
When its great, round clock shall cease,
What cometh then ?—ah, cometh peace !
After-time.

After-time ; all nations know
Time, a universal foe ;
Time, who binds his brow with years,
Time, who takes all love endears ;
Who sets the days beneath his feet
And tramples them, a runner fleet ;
Who hurries past with birth and breath,
Who stoppeth not for life or death ;
Who brings all ill, who brings all good,—
A friend if rightly understood,—

After he shall cease with men,
What cometh then, what cometh then ?
When stars, and days, and nights, are done,
When no moon shines, and shines no sun,
When all things known shall pass and cease,
What cometh then ?—ah, cometh peace !

After-time.

THE END.









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